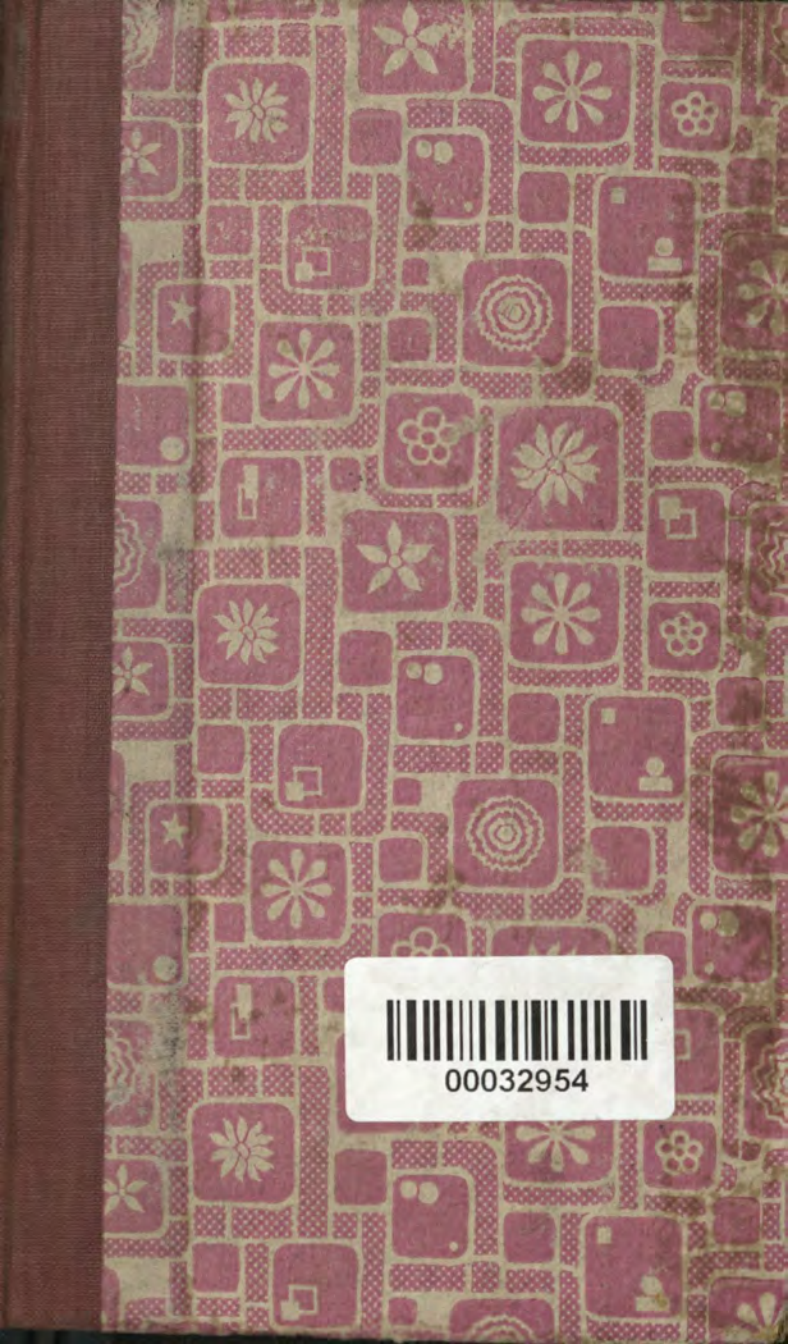
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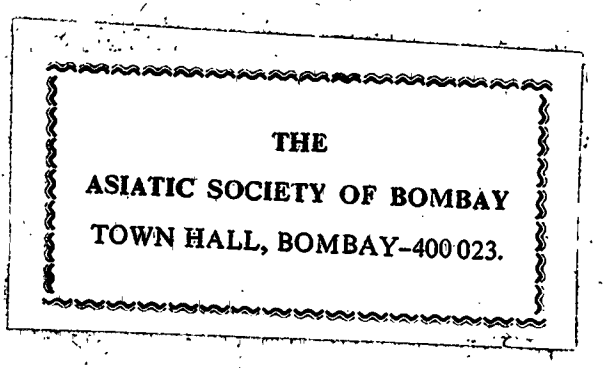

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PERSONAL ADVENTURES

AND

EXCURSIONS

IN

GEORGIA, CIRCASSIA,

AND

RUSSIA.

32954

BY

G. POULETT CAMERON, ESQ.,

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL, LATELY EMPLOYED ON A SPECIAL SERVICE IN PERSIA.

COMPANION OF THE BATH; KNIGHT COMMANDER OF THE TOWER AND SWORD; KNIGHT OF THE MILITARY ORDER OF THE CONCEPTION.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

HENRY COLBURN, PUBLISHER,

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1845.

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TO

HENRY, MARQUIS OF LANSDOWNE,

K.G., F.R.S., &c. &c.,

WHOM MEN OF ALL PARTIES

AND EVERY SHADE OF POLITICAL OPINION

UNITE IN REGARDING WITH RESPECT AND ESTEEM,

THIS WORK IS DEDICATED BY

THE AUTHOR.

INTRODUCTION.

The following pages were originally published at the suggestion of Major Shadwell Clerke, K.H., F.R.S., &c., the late editor of the United Service Magazine. When they were first brought to the notice of the public in that Journal, feelings of the bitterest nature against Russia, which then pervaded nearly all ranks and all parties, had found vent in certainly a most anti-British manner; not merely in acrimonious invective against the policy and government of the Muscovite Empire, but in heaping every description of abuse on the personal character of its sovereign, his family, nobility, and people *en masse*.

Major Shadwell Clerke, a Peninsula veteran, and who had himself served with the Imperial Forces when Russia was the stedfast ally of England, had in vain exerted himself to check this most injurious and impolitic, as well as ungenerous torrent of ill feeling, which had attained its highest degree of virulent intensity when I returned to London from a particular service

in Constantinople, Asia Minor, the Black Sea, &c., in the early part of 1840, having only the year previous arrived from St. Petersburg, from a similar tour of duty in Persia, &c.

As the circumstances of my situation precluded all interference in politics, had I even been so inclined, and as I had personally witnessed, amidst all the kindness and hospitality I had experienced in Russia, the heartburning and resentment these attacks occasioned among *all* classes, including even those whose attachment to the Autocrat, or the institutions of their country, by no means partook of the fervour of the torrid zone, but who yet, naturally enough, felt most deeply the insults and contumely heaped without reserve so indiscriminately upon their race and nation, Major Shadwell Clerke was induced to apply to me, and suggest that the circumstances under which I was placed would perhaps render any observations I might offer regarding Russia worthy of some degree of consideration, as those of a person unbiassed by any partiality, and would tend to soften the angry feelings prevalent against that country, which were fast rising to actual rancour. Accordingly, some few light sketches of personal, or military narrative (for of course I could enter upon no other), were prepared, exhibiting the very different sentiments which, whatever might be those of the Muscovite Government, existed, both nationally and individually, among the great body of the Russian nation towards England and Englishmen.

Though somewhat more than dubious as to my success, remembering the well-established adage that "he must be a bold champion who ventures singly to combat against public opinion," I undertook the office; but, much to my surprise, and certainly extremely to my gratification—whether owing to that spirit of fair play so usually characteristic of British proceedings in general, which, if withheld towards Russia, was most assuredly exercised to the fullest extent towards my unworthy self—the whole press, beginning with Father Times, the Herald, Post, Chronicle, &c., united in bestowing upon the various chapters, including even those which rubbed the hardest against their own preconceived opinions, the highest degree of commendation; nor was this all, as the favourable impression here described reached to the continent, and one or two French, and several of the German periodicals, noticed the work in a similarly flattering manner.

The latter struck me as the more remarkable, from my being well able, from personal experience, to bear witness to the truth of Mr. Kohl's observation that, throughout Germany, any person presuming to utter even the faintest praise of any thing connected with Russia is immediately set down either as extremely ignorant, or an emissary in the Muscovite interest.

Owing, therefore, to the favourable reception the publication has hitherto met with, I have been induced to bring forward, and embody the whole in one complete work, which is now submitted to the judgment of the

public. The reader, however, is cautioned to remember that he must not enter upon its perusal with an expectation of deriving any solid statistical information regarding Russia, its government, or history, the narrative being principally compiled from the military and travelling journal of one, who from the age of fifteen has passed nearly the whole period of his life mid scenes of wandering adventure, "by flood and field," in almost every quarter of the globe.

An occasional English or German critic has remarked, that in the favourable view I have sometimes taken of things in Russia, I have perhaps unintentionally, and unknowingly, been biassed by the personal kindness of the Emperor towards myself, and the splendour and gaieties of the Northern Metropolis.

To this mode of reasoning I beg leave to offer the most positive dissent; for, in the first place, relative to St. Petersburg, I must observe, and the reader will perceive, it was the only part of the Czar's vast dominions to which I imbibed a feeling very closely resembling dislike; while, concerning His Imperial Majesty, I take the liberty of mentioning that my *acquaintance* with him was of the most limited description, having never been honoured with more than three *interviews*, during the whole period of my stay in the capital. The first was, as I have described, on my presentation; the second in crossing the Neufskoi, when I very narrowly missed the disagreeable distinction of being run over by His Majesty's sledge, which

was tearing along at his usual clipping pace; and the third was at a ball, when, being engaged for a Polonnoise, I was about leading my partner forward (a very pretty girl, by the way), when a gentleman in an embroidered coat, and cutshorts, stepped up, and walked her off to the Emperor! Now, so thoroughly ingrate is human nature, that although the world may think I ought to feel more than ordinarily grateful for these two uncommon marks of distinction, I must confess that notwithstanding both were accompanied with a polite bow, and the latter with a smile (certainly of a somewhat dubious nature), I heartily wished His Imperial Majesty at the moment (particularly in the *last*), anywhere but where he was.

While on this subject, I shall take the opportunity of noticing the recent work on Russia, published by the Marquis de Custine. This nobleman, I believe, was at St. Petersburg at the same time as myself, and was received by the Emperor, and the whole of the Imperial family, with the most condescending courtesy and kindness; in return for which, on quitting the scene where he had been so honourably and hospitably entertained, he published to the whole world a work, not merely abounding in every species of invective against the laws, institutions, and customs of the Muscovite Empire (the which, perhaps, every traveller may claim a right to as public property), but a wanton personal attack upon its sovereign—exhibiting in every light that could render him odious and detestable

throughout the surface of the globe the monarch who, by *his own* description, had received him with a frank, confiding, and generous welcome.

Now, as I am one of that race of whom it used to be observed, "they never forgot a kindness and never forgave a ——" (there is so much lip-philanthropy in the world in the present day that I think I had better leave the rest of the sentence unfinished) — I suppose it is owing to the savage feelings of the "Mountain," hereditary within me, that I regard the circumstance of repaying open-hearted hospitality and friendly cordiality with slander and malice, as the very extreme of bad taste; I shall therefore merely observe, that in opposition to the information obtained by the Marquis de Custine, Heaven knows where, I beg to offer what I have gleaned in the course of my journey, from one extremity of Russia to the other, regarding its sovereign, in the peasant's hut, in the frankness of military intercourse, and in the noble's palace, amid all ranks, and all classes, including even gentlemen who have perused, and deeply pondered with enthusiastic fervour, the writings of Rousseau, Voltaire, Mirabeau, &c., &c., as well as those who have experienced the severity of his displeasure; and, many among whom have passed weeks, months, years of their life, mid the dreary snows of the Siberian waste! — And yet, what is *their* opinion?

They will tell you that the Emperor Nicholas is fearful in his wrath; arbitrary, despotic, and impe-

rious; but with a lofty, high-souled, and generous spirit, joined to a degree of magnanimity which no monarch has ever surpassed. This is the account of those who fear and dislike him. But what, on the other hand, is heard from others who love, venerate, and revere him? In his conduct as a father, husband, brother, and in every tie of domestic life which commands esteem and respect from all; as the ameliorator, the open and avowed enemy of slavery, and the true and steady friend of the lower classes of his subjects—towards raising whom from their present debased position the whole force of his powerful mind is now turned, by the introduction among them of arts, manufactures, commerce, and improved modes of agriculture, and by whom he is regarded with feelings approaching almost to religious veneration;—and as the noble, liberal, and generous master, ever mindful of, and prompt to reward with munificence, devotion and attachment to his government and person.

As I have heard the last in more than one instance questioned, let me adduce a slight incident, as an example of the truth of what I have asserted. A general officer of distinguished reputation, a foreigner, who had for a number of years been in the Russian army, in the course of a long and brilliant career had rendered to the government services of the highest, most important, and meritorious description. Appointments, with princely revenues and emoluments, were showered upon him; but his was a magnificent

nature, and the rich remuneration received from a foreign power for service, however faithfully rendered, he deemed ought to be dispensed in the country from whence it was derived. The consequence was that at his death he bequeathed his widow to the paternal care of the Russian government, his children being happily most fortunately settled in life, his two daughters by high and wealthy marriages, and his son by the produce of a manufactory, which his father had presented him on his entering the Cuirassier Guards, which, yielding about £1,200 sterling per annum, enabled him, with ease and respectability, to maintain his position in that brilliant service.

The dying veteran's expectations were fully realized by the late Emperor Alexander, immediately after his death, settling a pension upon his widow, amounting to £2,600 a year, English money. Shortly after the accession of the present sovereign, the manufactory belonging to her son unfortunately caught fire, and was wholly destroyed. This was indeed a severe blow, and as there are not (or rather perhaps I should say were not) any Insurance Offices in Russia, the prospects of this fine and gallant soldier seemed irretrievably ruined, and he himself reduced to the worst extreme of poverty. Of course, he immediately tendered the resignation of his commission, which being transmitted to the Emperor, he received an order to be in attendance the following morning.

On appearing at the office of the Imperial Etat

Major at the appointed hour, he was ushered into the presence of the Autocrat, by whom he was most kindly received, and who, calling his attention to the letter he had forwarded the day previous, desired to know if dislike to the service, or any motive of a similar nature, had been the cause of the step he had taken. The young man with considerable emotion mentioned in reply, that nothing could be farther from the real reason than the one His Majesty had suggested; that his devotion to his colours was as firm and unchangeable as when he first joined his regiment; and that nothing but the heavy misfortune which had befallen him (and which the Emperor was well aware rendered his remaining in the corps wholly impossible), would have ever induced him to quit the army.

He then detailed the facts connected with the destruction of his property, to the narrative of which the Autocrat listened with the profoundest attention. At its conclusion, after a short silence, he said: "De B——, the remembrance of the great and important services rendered by your father to Russia, would alone induce me, were I even otherwise inclined (which from what I have observed of you I most assuredly am not), to assist you in this matter; but, although I am a rich man, you must be sensible of the numerous claims I possess upon my consideration, and therefore your mother must come forward to assist us. As a single lady, her pension is more than

sufficient for her own maintenance, and I feel assured she would make any sacrifice on behalf of her son; she must therefore allow you from her income the odd six hundred she receives, while I will grant you a similar sum from my own private purse, and thus restore you to your former position. There, no thanks; I am much occupied just now—(for, with equal tact and delicacy, observing the soldier to be so overpowered with gratitude as to be wholly incapable of uttering a word, he took this method of quietly dismissing him). Rejoin your corps, and let me see you at the head of your squadron on parade to-morrow morning."

But, it will be exclaimed, look at his arbitrary, unjust, and despotic acts towards his subjects—his inordinate ambition and extensive aggressions—his conduct towards Poland—his designs upon Central Asia—and his endeavours to subvert the British empire in India.

To the first of these accusations I rejoin, that I have witnessed, and within the last two years, under *British rule*, acts of individual oppression and injustice, that could not have been surpassed by any Russian authority throughout the whole of the Muscovite empire, originating too in the most illiberal and unworthy motives. To the second I reply, that the organ of *acquisitiveness*, from the creation of the world up to the present period, has ever been recognised and understood as the most distinguishing trait in the

character of monarchs and governments of all nations, and therefore, in my poor estimation, I think it is wholly unreasonable to expect the Emperor Nicholas to step forward as a solitary example to the contrary; not to mention the reminiscence attached to the old proverb anent "those who live in glass houses throwing stones," which forcibly recurs to memory, after throwing a glance upon the map, and taking a cursory view of the possessions of Austria, in Italy—Prussia, on the Rhine—France, in Africa—and England—ahem!

The last of the foregoing accusations is certainly of a far graver and much more serious nature. But I would beg leave to suggest, as the most efficient remedy for the evil, an ambassador being despatched either to the Baltic or the Euxine, (though, by the way, sending one to *each* would be far better), with his flag at the main, and a due proportion of attachés in the shape of line-of-battle ships, frigates, and steamers, (universally admitted as the ablest and most successful negociators throughout the globe); and having displayed his artillery, (pooh! his credentials I mean), politely intimate to the Czar how extremely distressed the British government are to interfere with his amusements, but, as they are *really* of a nature to materially injure pursuits of their own, they would feel deeply indebted to His Imperial Majesty if he would be graciously pleased to discontinue them!

With so reasonable a demand the Emperor is too

well bred a man not immediately to comply! and I would further venture to mention, that such a proceeding, in every way worthy of England's fame and glory, would cause her to be regarded with fear and respect; feelings, I should imagine, of a far higher character than those of anger and contempt, which a contrary course is alone calculated to inspire.

G. POULETT CAMERON.

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PERSONAL ADVENTURES

IN

GEORGIA, CIRCASSIA,

&c.

CHAPTER I.

From Tabreez to Teflis by Nakhsheerwan, Erivan, and Eutch-Miazin (The Three Churches)—The Maiden's Leap.

I quitted Tabreez (the ancient Tauris) on the morning of the 15th April, 1838, *en route* to the North, accompanied for several miles from the city by those friends and companions with whom I had been associated on a period of service for the last two years.

On bidding farewell to them, I pressed forward, and arrived, without any incident occurring worthy of notice, at the town, or rather village, of Marand, and which, formerly of considerable size and importance, is now a large

straggling heap of ruins, with scarcely four hundred inhabitants. One sole object worthy of attention consists in a building of a particularly massive character, with a number of domes, each supported by a pilaster of considerable size and thickness; all information, however, as to what purpose it was originally intended appears to be lost, and, notwithstanding the assertions of the inhabitants to the contrary, I am inclined to think, from its make and character, it belongs to a period far prior to the Mussulman subjugation of Armenia.

The valley of Marand, at this period of the year, presents a picture not to be witnessed in any other part of the globe, perhaps, than the north of Persia; for, while the surrounding hills are covered almost to their base with snow, the entire plain exhibits but one uninterrupted view of rich pasturage and fertile vineyards, resplendent with the early blossoms of spring.

The following morning I resumed my route, and reached the banks of the Arras shortly after six in the evening. This river, ever since the last disastrous campaigns of the late Prince Royal, Abbas Meerza, followed by the treaty of Turcoman Chai, in 1828, has formed the boun-

dary-line of the kingdom of Persia and the vast empire of Russia, including in this consequent cession of territory some of the finest provinces that had hitherto acknowledged the supremacy of the Shah.

The day had been marked throughout by heavy falls of rain and snow; and it may therefore be readily supposed that, having been in the saddle since daybreak, on crossing the river, and reaching the opposite side, the appearance of a Cossack hut (my destined abode for the next fourteen days), which on most other occasions would have been scanned with a critical minuteness not the most favourable, on the present occasion was hailed with a feeling of pleasure I have seldom experienced even on entering the first hotels on the Continent.

I was received with the utmost attention by the Commissary of the Quarantine on my arrival, who himself conducted me to the place I have previously specified as having been prepared for my reception. It was comfortless enough, certainly, to all appearance, and I felt an additional shiver come over me as we approached; but externals are frequently deceptive, and so it proved in the present instance, for I was most

agreeably surprised on entering to find the interior hung with coarse scarlet cloth, the floor swept and clean, a fire blazing cheerfully, while on a table in the centre was placed a basin of hot tea, a small bottle of rum to compound with the same, and a loaf of very fine wheaten bread; the whole of which comfortable arrangements were, I am inclined to believe, owing to a letter furnished me for the occasion and despatched beforehand by the Imperial Consul-General at Tabreez, M. Kodonitz, of whose kindness on this occasion I shall ever retain the liveliest remembrance.

The following morning the sun shone clear and bright, and, emerging from my solitary cell, I was enabled to take a more accurate survey of the environs of my destined place of imprisonment than my yesterday's cursory glance afforded me.

Ye who have ever performed quarantine at Marseilles or Malta (which it has been my lot to do more than once), bestowing anything but *blessings* on the passing time (a daily occurrence with myself), reflect for a moment upon the many little advantages afforded you by these establishments. Your friends admitted to converse with

you (through the grating), the convenience of a well-arranged restaurant, your evening row or sail in the quarantine guard-boat, and the various views of the shipping, town, and harbour, which till then you may have never perhaps previously beheld; turn your thoughts, I repeat, upon these and sundry other minor enjoyments (as I most penitentially have done since), and never deem yourself completely miserable till you have performed a similar ceremony on the banks of the Arras (as I, alas! have also), where — mark the contrast — on every side the eye rests upon a wide sandy plain, enclosed by dark-grey and red-looking rocks, the summits of which at this period are covered with snow; not a blade of grass, or the trace of any verdure whatever, is to be seen, the whole prospect presenting but one continued scene of barrenness and desolation.[1]

But enough; here I was, and (what was worse) here I was to remain for the space of fourteen

[1] The following sketch affords a graphic description of this singularly wild and desolate spot in the summer:—

"Ce sont des vallées, et des montagnes, de formes et de couleurs si étrangement austères, qu'on aurait peine à imaginer une telle scene, a moins d'être douè du gènie sombre et vigoureux de Salvator Rosa. Ses teintes verdâtres et volcaniques, repandues sur la campagne, semblent produites par un conflit terrible

days, in company with the following: one commissary (who united in his sole person the entire civil and military authority of the establishment), one corporal, and three Cossacks of the Don, and one serjeant and twelve soldiers from a regiment in garrison at Erivan. Of the former it may be said that, if not particularly remarkable for good looks (the smallpox having seamed and scarred his features to an extent so as scarcely to leave even a faint outline of their original formation visible), he was civil, obliging, and attentive, to a degree that could not be surpassed, and that, too, without the least spark of that inordinate craving for remuneration (I should rather say, extortion) of which almost all grades of Russian officials are so justly accused, as the following instance will testify:—Towards the close of my quarantine, I had repeatedly offered him presents of a trifling nature, and which, indeed, I was but too happy to request his acceptance of, were it only as some slight mark of my appreciation of his civility towards myself; these, however, had been invariably declined; and it was

entre les feux souterrains et la vegetation de la surface." — From the Journal of a Tour from Teflis to Teheran in 1839, published in Paris by the Prince Alexis de Soltikoff.

only on the day of my departure, while my servants were packing up and getting ready for commencing our journey on the following morning, that I observed his attention fixed, with a longing and wistful eye, upon a pair of razors belonging to my dressing-case. As I had several, I hastened to proffer them to his acceptance; but, though he evidently wished to possess them, to my surprise, the offer was gratefully but firmly declined.

I merely mention this little episode from its *singularity;* for, though I myself journeyed under circumstances which exempted me from the annoyances to which all travellers, more or less, are subject throughout the Russian Empire, not a single stranger did I encounter, in my subsequent route between St. Petersburg and the Caucasus, who did not indignantly complain of the impositions and exactions they were compelled everywhere, and on all occasions, to submit to.

But to resume. The Cossacks presented nothing particularly extraordinary, while the infantry soldiers exhibited such a striking similarity of appearance, not merely in their uniforms and appointments, but white bullet-heads, round faces, high cheek-bones, and pug-noses,

that it was some time before I could distinguish one from another.

Drearily and heavily dragged on the time, the only incidents that marked the entire period being an occasional scraping on the commissary's fiddle (I of course must not term it a violin, as I never ascertained that the musician's knowledge extended beyond three tunes), and the arrival of a caravan to participate in the pleasures of durance vile with myself.

But all things must have an end, even a Russian quarantine; and, on the morning of the 30th, my probation being finished, I sprang upon my horse, who, by his plunging and bounding, seemed to be as well pleased to be liberated as myself, and, having bidden a cordial farewell to my friend the commissary, took the road to Nakhsheerwan, all doubts as to the efficacy of solitary confinement as a punishment, if I ever entertained any, being effectually removed.

En route, I once more came in view, and a magnificent one it was, of Mount Ararat[1]—so

[1] I first passed it by Byazeed, on the Turkish frontier, in August, 1836, when *en route* from Constantinople to Persia, in the suite of Sir John M'Neil, G.C.B., her Majesty's Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the Court of the latter country.

grand, so awful, in comparison with which all other objects, however vast and striking, sink into utter insignificance; while the feelings of religious and historic veneration, with which the passing traveller regards this stupendous work of the Creator, all unite to render it, in his mind, the sublimest object on the surface of the globe.

It is termed Agree-Dagh by the inhabitants of the country, and close beside it rises a smaller mountain, corresponding almost in every respect to the larger, and known by the name of the Cuchuk Agree-Dagh, or Lesser Ararat.

Since the period when the ark rested on its summit, no mortal footstep has ever reached it, and, though many daring and adventurous persons have made the attempt, particularly a distinguished and energetic French traveller,[1] who persevered to the last, all have been compelled to abandon the enterprise. A story is prevalent among the Armenian population of a Turkish Pasha (at what period I could not ascertain), who, determining upon accomplishing the ascent, very deliberately provided tents and provisions for himself and his attendants, and

[1] Tournefort.

commenced operations as if about undertaking a journey of some extent. After the second day's march, down came the whole party, pell-mell, at a much quicker rate than they went up, declaring that they had been waylaid, buffeted, and the Lord knows what, by a whole host of legionary devils, ghosts, hobgoblins, and other spiritual gentry, who apparently seemed to regard the intended visit as a most unauthorized intrusion upon their private sanctuary!

On my arrival at Nakhsheerwan, I proceeded to the residence of the Director-general of the arrondissement, to whom I was furnished with letters of introduction. He was out, but I was accosted on entering by a very gentlemanly and good-looking young man, who, however, speaking neither English, French, Italian, nor Turkish, nor indeed any other language but Russian, I was first at a loss to understand; as, however, on his intelligent countenance was written, in very legible characters, "I so much wish to please you!" I soon contrived to comprehend his meaning, which was for me to sit down, and await the arrival of his superior, who would not be long before he made his appearance.

I accordingly took a seat, and, for about ten

minutes, we enacted a species of burletta in dumb-show, which said performance, partaking in its character of a good deal of the ludicrous, was only terminated by the entrance of the master of the house, who with military frankness and the utmost cordiality welcomed me to his residence.

It required no great insight into human character at once to perceive my host was the very emblem of courteous hospitality and nobleness of nature. His history was an eventful one; by birth a Pole, of a high and distinguished family, he had served in the army of Napoleon, in the Lancers of the Guard, during which period he was present in the earlier part of the campaigns in Spain, and subsequently in those of the Austrian, Prussian, and Russian. After the battle of Leipzic, he quitted the army, in which he had attained the rank of Lieutenant-colonel, having been wounded and taken prisoner on that eventful day, so disastrous to the Imperial arms.

Although engaged in several minor affairs with the British forces, the only one of a general nature he had ever come in contact with them was that of Albuera (two reminiscences of which

he still carried in the shape of a sabre-cut and bayonet-stab), his regiment forming one of those who made such desperate havoc among our ranks on that brilliant and sanguinary day—a day, he candidly informed me, well calculated to make a lasting impression upon an enemy relative to the strength, energy, and prowess, as well as dogged resolution, of the British soldier in the field.

"In that charge," he said, "so admirably and faithfully delineated by your gallant English historian,[1] when the lancers crashed among the infantry, spearing, and apparently bearing down all before them, it was something new to see an array, as we thought broken and discomfited, instead of either seeking safety in flight, grounding arms, and surrendering, or submitting to be sabred, with all the complacency of military law, according to custom, now that the rear was gained or flank turned, which would assuredly have been the case with the troops of any other power—it was as new as unexpected to hear on every side nothing but one strong and emphatic, though somewhat coarse and vulgar, national

[1] Colonel Napier.—I had General Dumas' translation of the two first volumes with me.

execration, whilst bayonet and musket-but continued in full and vigorous play upon the assailing horsemen (thus exhibiting the practical utility of the good old English custom of boxing and cudgel-playing), and finally to view the apparently annihilated foe, as if by magic, once more arrayed before them, like a pillar of iron, fearfully diminished in number, it is true, but still firm and unyielding!"

Another incident he mentioned, which, though perhaps trivial in itself, made a deep impression on him. After the battle, when ordered to France, to form part of the army destined for the Austrian campaign, his regiment was directed to escort some English prisoners *en route* to the frontier. On the march, he observed a remarkably fine young man, one of our light dragoons, with his head bandaged and his arm in a sling, *souvenirs* of the recent action; feeling his interest somewhat awakened by his appearance, he proposed to the soldier that he should be his servant during the journey, an arrangement which would have considerably added to his personal comfort. "I'll see you d—d first!" was the reply. "I serve my King, and never will one of his enemies; however, the offer was

kindly meant, and so, Mounseer, I thank you all the same, though I can't accept it." The Pole sprang from his horse, and, shaking the astonished soldier by the hand, from that time till he lost sight of him, on his being handed over to the municipal authorities, became his stedfast friend, finding means on parting to send him linen, clothes, and a small supply of money.

The following day I was occupied in riding about the town, which, forming the chief place of the small government of the same name, exhibits an appearance of almost one continued heap of ruins, and may contain on an average a population of about 1700 or 1800 souls. It remains in much the same state as when first ceded to its present possessors, and, except as being the frontier town, and constituting a depôt for the trade from the south, exhibits little worthy of note, except some few traces of former grandeur, in all probability of the period when occupied by the Turks.

The ensuing morning, however, afforded a spectacle by no means devoid of interest, and which consisted of a religious procession of the Armenian population (of which class the greater

part of the inhabitants is composed,) both men and women, to what tradition assigns to be the tomb of Noah.

On our arrival, I was considerably disappointed to find the building presented no other aspect than a very strong resemblance to a dilapidated wine-cellar, arched, and covered over with red brick. As the avowal of such an irreverent thought, however, would have been productive of the highest degree of horror in the minds of the multitude, who were promenading with the utmost solemnity round the sacred edifice, I lost no time in arranging my own visage with the requisite proportion of longitudinal gravity previous to entering.

The interior differed in no respect from the outside, a solitary stone, surmounted with a few bricks, marking the supposed resting-place of the Jewish patriarch. One thing, however, I must not omit to mention, which is, that the building, whatever it is, is certainly of very ancient date, its material being fixed with that cement, as hard as marble, the composition of which so many persons of modern times have vainly endeavoured to ascertain.

The next day, accompanied by my kind host,

who rode a few miles with me from the town, I resumed my journey.

The two intermediate stages between Nakhsheerwan and Erivan offer nothing worthy of any particular observation from the passing traveller, if I except that his route lies almost at the foot of the mighty Ararat, of whose vast extent some idea may be formed, when I state that, after a journey of nearly sixty miles, it appeared that I was in exactly the same spot from whence I had originally started.

On the second day, while riding three or four miles to the right of the high road, (an inveterate and vagabondizing propensity to straggling, from which has, from time immemorial, formed one of my strongest characteristics,) I came upon what were certainly the traces of a fortress of considerable size, with a citadel in its interior. Though nothing remained but mounds of earth, still the entire outline of the ditch and fortifications was remarkably complete and accurate. The walls must have been of immense strength and thickness, measuring from five and thirty to forty feet in breadth. All my subsequent inquiries on the subject could lead to nothing beyond its having been a great place in former

times, and built by one of the Armenian sovereigns, long prior to the Christian era: the usual answer, I eventually found, to all questions the solution of which was a matter of doubt or difficulty.

The day was drawing to a close as I reached the city of Erivan, the approach to which is somewhat pleasing, after the wearisome and monotonous sameness of the entire route from the Arras. It is situated, in various straggling, detached portions, at the base of a range of hills, and, being intermixed with gardens, at this period filled with variegated blossoms, the effect produced from a distance was extremely agreeable.

For a long time, Erivan formed the capital of the north of Persia, under the celebrated and powerful Hussein Khan, the Surdar (supreme ruler and military commander) of the frontier, whose administration is to this day remembered alike by Mussulman and Christian with regret; for, notwithstanding his fierce and sanguinary character, under his firm and impartial though arbitrary sway, the country presented an appearance of wealth and prosperity, seldom witnessed within the last half century beneath the

rule of a Persian monarch; while his talents as a commander, together with his dauntless intrepidity and energetic enterprising character as a soldier, claimed the respect even of his enemies.

The history of this singular man is to the full as extraordinary as those of his Turkish contemporaries, Paswan Oglou, Ali Pasha, or Mehemet Ali; to the latter of whom, in his government, his character may be said to be very closely assimilated.

By birth a Koord,[1] he was originally stationed on the frontier, in command of a body of his countrymen, (whom on his subsequent elevation he ever after retained about him, and were the troops on whom he placed the greatest reliance,)

[1] I have since been given to understand from a high authority, one, too, personally intimate with the Surdar, that this celebrated character was not, as is very generally, but erroneously supposed, a Koord, but belonged to the tribe of the Kujur Toorks, the same being that of the Royal family of Persia. The circumstance of his partiality for, and always retaining near him so large a body of Koordish soldiery, is accounted for by the superior estimation these troops were generally held in, the more especially as Light Cavalry, a description of force which, joined with some flying artillery, was invariably wielded with terrible effect by the Surdar during the wars between Russia and Persia.

to check the encroachments of the Russians. It has been asserted, by those who knew him almost from the commencement of his career, that he had slain more men in battle alone, with his own hand, than he had hairs in his beard; and though this ornament to his figure was somewhat of the strongest and thickest, I never yet met with a person who was not disposed to believe the number considerably underrated!

By his energy and activity he soon rose to higher rank, and was at length invested with the sole government of the frontier, which, by the wisdom of his rule, and the vigour of his measures, he quickly brought to a state of security and flourishing prosperity it had not beheld for many years.

With the most absolute sway, he maintained a state of almost royal magnificence. His justice was as summary as effective; and, if a tyrant himself, he certainly admitted of no coadjutors, and never permitted, under pain of the most rigorous punishment, any subordinate tyranny in his dominions. In this he exceeded even what the sovereigns of Persia had never dared to venture upon; and several of the Mahometan priesthood, more than once, on being found

guilty of sundry malpractices, in addition to being mulcted in very heavy fines, were soundly bastinadoed in the most heterodox manner.

His wealth was immense; but this was not drawn from the usual Asiatic sources, extortion and oppression, but from he himself farming a considerable part of the country, and engaging in commercial speculations to a very great extent —he having the sagacity to perceive that the prosperity of the country added to the power and influence of its ruler, while an opposite line of conduct was productive of completely the reverse.

The fort has the reputation (certainly undeserved) of possessing considerable strength, and the signal and disastrous failure of the Russians, on three different occasions, to take it, under its able and energetic commander, (the last time when upwards of seventy years of age,) added greatly to its renown. It is defended on one side by a dry ditch, with a double range of mud walls and bastions; the whole of which, however, might be levelled in a good four-and-twenty hours' cannonade. The other is flanked by an immense and almost perpendicular precipice of bluff rock, at the foot of which runs the

river Zengui, and which is familiarly known by the name of a Turkish word, signifying "The Maiden's Leap," from an incident which occurred during the war of 1811, when a young girl actually threw herself down from this stupendous height.

As the incident in question is one of comparatively recent occurrence, and the truth of which there are hundreds now living in the neighbourhood to attest, and moreover exhibits a picture of the heroic resolution to which the naturally gentle nature of woman may be strung in these "lands of the sun," when under the influence of that one, sole, magic, all-absorbent passion of their lives—love—its introduction into these pages may not possibly appear irrelevant. If, therefore, the reader will follow me in an indifferent translation of the narrative in question, (over a bottle of very excellent wine of the Cachetia,[1]) from the Tatar-Turkish of my respected friend and host, Yacoob Parsedeenoff,

[1] The Georgian wines very strongly resemble those of the Upper Douro, that of Cachetia being esteemed the best. On the estates of the Prince de C——, in this province, a remarkably fine and delicately-flavoured wine is made, very similar in taste to Collares or Burgundy.

an opulent Armenian merchant, at whose house I was domiciled during my stay at Erivan, he will obtain an outline of the history of

THE MAIDEN'S LEAP.

It was a hot, sultry day, in the month of August, 1810; the evening was drawing on, and the city of Erivan seemed scarcely even yet to revive from the more than usually overpowering heat that had prevailed throughout the morning.

In the various gardens, the general rendezvous of the Persians after sunset in the summer season, some few groups might be discerned canvassing the probability of the Russians advancing upon the city, (for the war was then at its height, (and the chance of the Surdar's recently harassing operations in the shape of predatory excursions, midnight assaults, cutting off of convoys, and fierce and desultory warfare in general, having so far crippled their resources, as to place it out of their power to hazard the attempt; though, admitting even its possibility, and their eyes glanced upon the dark-looking fortress which rose in the distance before them, would the efforts of the Muscovites on this occa-

sion prove more successful than when, baffled in their former attempt, after repeated and heavy losses, they were reluctantly compelled to retreat.

In the palace of that (to one, at least) gloomy and dreary abode of tyrannic power, in a rich and superbly decorated chamber of large dimensions, exhibiting the finest and highest order of Saracenic elegance, in the anderoon, or women's apartments, overlooking the precipice on which one side of the fortress is situated, on a divan of the richest cachemere, half concealed by its cushions, reclined a female figure, so still and motionless that, but for the deep and half-suffocating sobs which burst from her overwrought bosom, and echoed mournfully through the room, existence might almost have been supposed to have passed away from the otherwise inanimate form.

Suddenly the mourner arose;—what a glorious model of female loveliness for the statuary or painter! Rather above the middle height, her figure possessed that perfect symmetry of make, which so peculiarly marks the Caucasian race of every denomination: her countenance, colourless as the whitest marble, was yet exquisitely

beautiful; and though despair of the deepest and darkest nature sat but too visibly enthroned on every outline of each expressive feature, still it would have been wholly impossible to imagine a being more pre-eminently lovely: the large, dark, gazelle-like eye, the poet's dream in every land, alike east or west—the richly-cut lip of the deepest, brightest crimson, revealing the half-opened rows of teeth, white as the ivory of the forests of Serendib,[1]—all formed a picture rarely to be equalled, never to be excelled.

What were the thoughts of that bright and beautiful being at that lone hour? were they of her own blighted happiness, and desolate misery? —They were; though as a secondary consideration only, the first and almost sole reflections of that pure and lofty mind being directed not to herself, but her parents, and (additional agony as the remembrance rose in her bosom) to *him*, who had long won her plighted affection and maiden troth, and whose bride she was to have become on the very morning, ay, the very hour when torn from her parent's, her lover's arms, she became the inmate of the hated harem,

[1] Ceylon.

to be eventually devoted to what it maddened her brain to dwell upon.

How vividly she recalled that fearful period! It wanted but a few minutes of the time appointed for the ceremony to take place; and, leaning on the shoulder of her beloved Alexis, while awaiting the arrival of their mutual relatives and friends, she listened with blushing tenderness to the passionate avowal he was pouring in her ear, when all at once their peaceful dwelling was surrounded by the hostile cavalry. Her lover fought like a lion; but, alas! what resistance could be offered against a host? and having witnessed her betrothed as well as her aged parent struck senseless to the earth, the unfortunate Miriam was only restored to consciousness, to find herself an inmate of the zenana, and a prisoner in the hands of the dreaded and sanguinary chief, whose name she had never previously heard without a shudder.

It was the second evening of her arrival at the fortress, as she rose from her couch, on which she had tried, how vainly! in some measure to tranquillize her agonized mind; her hands were clinched, and the wildness of delirium shot in fiery and fitful glances from her eye;—but it as

suddenly ceased, as, throwing herself on her knees, her arms drooped to her side, and then were again raised in one long, deep, and fervent prayer to Heaven for succour.

She arose comparatively relieved; and, though still sad and unhappy, gazed from the window upon the extensive scene before her.

A slight noise, issuing from one end of the apartment, disturbed her, while almost at the same instant something fell heavily at her feet. The room had an enclosed balcony, with a large painted window in the centre at each end, thus forming, as it were, two smaller chambers, from whence any person commanded a full and complete view of what was passing in the larger; and from one of these a hand was waved for an instant, and then disappeared. She stooped to pick up and ascertain what had fallen; it proved to be a stone encircled round with a roll of paper: and words are wholly incapable of expressing the feelings of transport which rushed in a torrent through the bosom of the forlorn and desolate young girl, as she perused the following:—

"Be cautious and prudent; you have a friend at hand, who will hazard every risk to save and

restore you to your kindred and friends; no danger will threaten your attempt if you remain firm and resolute, as the chance of success depends almost wholly upon yourself. Three hours after sunset be prepared for immediate flight."

What a transition from the utmost abyss of despair, to the highest and most sanguine anticipations of hope!—for one solitary, single instant only the idea of treachery crossed her mind, but was as immediately dismissed, since what worse fate could befall her than that with which she was already threatened, and to which, indeed, the most lingering death would have been happiness in preference? Nought therefore possessed her imagination but visions of future bliss and love,—to be, oh! how much more appreciated now, from her recent anguish, and forcible separation from all in life most dear!

Drearily, slowly, and heavily the time moved on: to the impatient feelings of the maiden, it appeared as if the destined hour was never to arrive. At length, the sun slowly disappeared behind the distant hills; darkness shortly afterwards closed in around; and, with a beating

heart, the young girl counted the minutes as they passed.

As the hour drew nigh, the sound of a low tap at the door of the apartment fell upon her ear—her heart beat violently—its throbbing might almost have been heard as it beat against her snowy bosom; the signal was repeated, and the purdah,[1] parting aside, gave entrance to a veiled female figure, who, raising her finger as a caution to the captive to be silent, produced the common blue yashmak[2], usually worn by the Mussulman women of the country, and motioned her to assume it. This was quickly complied with: and, after listening anxiously and attentively for several minutes, the woman, repeating her signal for caution, beckoned her to follow.

They proceeded in swiftness and silence, without encountering a living being; every person had evidently, through some means, been purposely removed; and at length emerging from the anderoon, or women's apartments, they

[1] A curtain usually suspended before the doors of the apartments of almost all Asiatic dwellings.

[2] A large fold of linen cloth, answering the purpose of a cloak or veil, and completely enshrouding the person.

diverged into a long and narrow passage, dimly lighted, till their further progress was stopped by a door, from whence, on the bolts being withdrawn by her guide, they found themselves in the open air, by the harem's private entrance outside the palace.

The sounds of mirth and laughter from a distance proclaimed the Surdar as fully occupied in one of those revels in which he so frequently indulged; and Miriam felt an involuntary shudder come over her for the moment, as a light from an upper window glanced upon a solitary figure, muffled in a coarse baroomah, or cloak, standing near, and who, as they emerged from the doorway, advanced towards them.

A brief parley, in a low tone, passed between her guide and the stranger; the former of whom had removed the veil from her face, and Miriam had an opportunity for the moment, in some measure, of observing both. The countenance of the first exhibited the features of an elderly woman, of a particularly dark and swarthy but otherwise pleasing cast; of the latter, she could discern nothing, except that at one period his cloak slipped from his left shoulder, and she distinctly saw beneath the outline of a light and

stripling form, wearing the rich and gorgeous costume of a Circassian page. As their conversation ceased, her guide again beckoned her forward, while the stranger, approaching, uttered in a low and fervent but sweet and melodious voice the usual Turkish benediction, or farewell, "Khodah sackhlah!" (God preserve you!) and disappeared on the instant.

They now moved swiftly onward, increasing their pace at times almost to a run, and soon reached the gateway of the fort: it was open, and the drawbridge lowered; in another minute it was passed,—they were in the plain, and Miriam, breathing a deep and fervent thanksgiving to Heaven for her deliverance, felt her liberation already secured.

She now, for the first time, put several questions to her conductress, who, however, answered in a language with which she was wholly unacquainted and had never previously heard; but which, conjoined with her appearance, she was led to believe must be one of the numerous Koordish[1] dialects of the province, being well

[1] Though much diminished since the occupation of the province by the Russians, a number of the wandering Koordish tribes still inhabit the plains and mountains of Erivan.

aware that it was neither Turkish nor Persian, both of which she herself spoke with the utmost fluency.

Avoiding the town, they struck off to the right; and after a walk of two or three versts, a turn of the road brought them upon a man pacing impatiently up and down, in front of a couple of horses, which, ready bridled and saddled, stood picketed under some trees.

In another minute, Miriam was clasped in the arms of her lover, and pressed to the heart of her idolized, adored Alexis, who, forcing a purse of considerable value upon her guide, quickly placed his affianced bride upon one of the chargers, and then, vaulting upon the other, they sprang forward at a gallop, and soon left the dreaded city far, far behind.

As they slackened their pace, to avoid blowing the horses, Alexis found time to acquaint his betrothed with several circumstances connected with her liberation.

"On that fatal and unhappy morning," he commenced, "which beheld our fondest hopes and anticipated union, thus so cruelly torn asunder, it was some time ere I fully recovered the stunning effects of the blow I had received

from the but of the matchlock of the Persian soldier, as he tore you from my arms. I bled profusely, but was otherwise not materially injured. On raising your father, however, he was found to have been much more seriously hurt, the stroke of a sabre having inflicted a dangerous wound, and entered deep into his shoulder.

"I ran with all speed to the adjoining village to procure assistance, and give the alarm; but, alas! several bodies, which met my view on entering, too plainly told what had occurred; it had been attacked, and partially plundered by the same band which had cast such blight and desolation over our own peaceful home, and who were only prevented from the more effectual completion of their work, by the alarm adroitly raised of the advance of a Russian picquet, upon which they immediately retreated, but bearing you, my Miriam, as well as what other plunder they had collected, along with them.

"Having witnessed every attention bestowed upon your wounded parent, my next thought was to follow the track of the marauding horsemen, and at all risks attempt your rescue. My first idea had been to proceed to the nearest

Russian outpost; but a minute's reflection taught me the inutility of such a measure, as, admitting the commanding officer directed an immediate pursuit, (which was doubtful, as the chances were he would not act without orders), such was the dexterity and rapidity with which both the attacks and retreats of the Surdar's forces were invariably conducted, that, before a single Cossack could be in the saddle, the enemy would be far beyond the reach of any attack. Under these circumstances, I felt that craft and judgment must effect what it was but too evident could not be accomplished by force.

"Accordingly, provided with a fleet horse, and well armed, I took the road to Erivan, which I felt well convinced, with such a prize, would be the spoiler's ultimate destination; nor was I deceived, as the morning of my arrival I heard of nothing but the recent successful chappou[1] of the Surdar's horse into Georgia, from which they had only returned the previous evening, bringing, it was asserted, among other fruits of their enterprise, a young female captive, of extraordinary beauty.

[1] Foray.

"Hitherto, the excitement of the journey, and the feverish state of my overwrought feelings, had prevented my thinking, or even remembering the severe contusion I had received; now, however, that this had passed away, I became sensible of an extreme giddiness, accompanied by a general debility and weakness, which oppressed me almost to fainting. With considerable difficulty, I contrived to crawl to a garden not far distant, and having plunged my head, neck, and hands into a stream that coursed through it, and which in a great measure cooled my feverish frame, I sunk into a deep and profound sleep.

"I awoke considerably refreshed, with my mind much calmer; and, having further invigorated myself with some of the rich fruit which grew in luxuriant abundance about me, proceeded towards the fortress.

"Oh! the aching, agonizing misery of those moments, as I wandered around it again and again; and then, exhausted and worn out, sunk down and gazed upon its dark, dreary walls, in the vain hope that some chance, however improbable, might occur, of finding means of communicating with my lost Miriam, though, at

times, I almost began to fear that reason might sink beneath the intense and racking nature of the thoughts which oppressed me.

"In this state, I passed the day; night closed in, but there I yet remained: I could not tear myself away; and the dawn of the following morning still found me rooted to the spot.

"It was within two hours of midday, when a female figure approached me; none were near, for the excessive heat had driven every one within their dwellings. At first, I did not observe her, but, as she neared where I was standing, having glanced cautiously around, she threw aside her veil, and revealed the dark features of a middle-aged person,—the same indeed who aided your escape to-night; and who I at once perceived, even before she addressed me, belonged to one of the Koordish tribes in the vicinity of the city.

"Finding, on accosting me, that I did not understand her, she had recourse to Turkish, though, speaking it so very imperfectly, I was at first wholly at a loss to comprehend what she could require, till she pronounced the magic name of Miriam.

"Heavens! what an electric shock passed

through my whole frame, as the well-loved sound fell upon my ear! I cast an eager and imploring glance upon her countenance;—she smiled, and then, with some little difficulty, I contrived to make out what she intended to express, which was, to charge me to depart, as my remaining longer where I was might excite suspicion, but to meet her on the same spot at a similar hour the following morning; and, above all, in the mean time, directed me to recruit and refresh myself, as I should shortly much need it.

"It was with a heart bounding with joy, and renovated gladness, that I promised implicit obedience to her suggestions; and though with difficulty I restrained my impatience, I yet compelled myself to do so, and did not repair there again until the appointed hour.

"She very soon after arrived; and, presenting me with a scroll, immediately disappeared. With an eager and trembling hand, I hastily tore it open, and perused the following:—

"'You have a friend within these walls. I have observed and watched your movements, and that which first originated in feelings of selfish consideration towards myself shall now

be completed at every hazard, from those of pity and admiration towards you and your betrothed. Be guarded and silent, and three hours after sunset be ready with two swift horses on the Teflis road, by the garden of the merchant Futteh Ali Beg, where may Allah in his mercy restore the lost and beloved one to your arms.'

"This was indeed a stroke of fortune, far beyond what my fondest and most sanguine hopes could have anticipated. With the place in question I was already familiar, as, situated in the very outskirts of Erivan, it was well known as the country residence of one of its richest traders.

"I flew back to the city, and, having seen every requisite attention paid to my own gallant steed, occupied the greater part of the rest of the day in selecting another; having purchased which, and made every other necessary arrangement, I carefully examined my arms, and repaired to the appointed rendezvous. The result, my Miriam, you are already acquainted with."

Here Alexis finished his narrative; a gentle but fervent pressure of the hand alone betokening the deep and all-absorbing interest taken in its recital by his hearer. One thing connected with

their recent adventures forcibly struck on the minds of both, and this was the question of as to who could be the powerful yet unknown friend whose influence had been so timely exercised in their behalf, and which appeared to be of such magnitude that even the zenana itself, usually so sacred among the Mussulmans, was subject to its control, it being evident the old woman was merely acting as an agent under the orders of another.

On this subject, Miriam could throw no light whatever; as, from the first moment of her being placed in the Surdar's harem, she had seen no one, with the exception of three or four female slaves of the establishment.

They journeyed throughout the night, and, as morning dawned, found themselves in the midst of a wide, extensive plain. Alexis was leaning over the saddle of his betrothed, gazing with ardent passion and fondness into those large, full, gazelle-like eyes, so brilliant and deathly-dark, now beaming with love and tenderness towards him, when suddenly he grew deadly pale, the perspiration of deep and bitter agony burst from his brow, and the acutest anguish,

which he vainly endeavoured to repress, convulsively shook every fibre of his frame.

Terrified and distressed, Miriam followed the direction of his eye, and a heavy, dreary sickness of heart came over her, as the cause became at once but too evidently manifest.

Far away, on the horizon, first one, two, and at length a party of seven horsemen appeared at intervals, in eager and ardent pursuit.

"Lost! lost!" exclaimed the unhappy girl, as she pressed her now bloodless lips for the moment to those of her distracted lover. The stupor, however, on his part, was but momentary; he quickly recovered his presence of mind, and, fiercely lashing her horse with his heavy riding-whip, plunged the spurs into his own, and they darted forward with the rapidity of lightning.

On—on they flew; but, alas! misery and apprehension invariably concur in rendering the senses, both of sight and hearing, painfully acute, and, ere half an hour had elapsed, both became sensible their pursuers were gaining rapidly on them; as indeed how could it be otherwise, their own horses having been on the

road, without the least intermission, for upwards of the last nine hours?

The more imminent the danger, however, and the nearer it approached, the stronger and more resolute appeared the determination of the young Georgian, as, unslinging his matchlock, with an eye expressive of the most daring energy, he measured the now fearfully decreasing distance between himself and his adversaries; his fixed resolve being taken, either to succeed in the enterprise so successfully begun, or perish in the attempt.

Clasping his mistress to his breast, perhaps for the last time, he said, in suppressed but firm tones, "Push on, beloved Miriam, and leave me to guard your retreat; nay, speak not, dearest, or you will unman me; the safety of us both—everything now depends upon our gaining time, by which, perchance, we may be enabled to fall in with some of the Russian outposts."

The wretched girl gazed imploringly upon him, but felt too forcibly the truth of what he had stated to trust herself with a reply.

With one deep, fond, and fervent kiss, they tore themselves asunder; and while she pressed

onward, Alexis drew rein, and slackened his pace for a moment, to examine his fire-arms. The nearest of his pursuers was now not three hundred yards distant, behind whom again a second appeared not half-a-dozen horse-lengths in the rear, while two others were close at the heels of their companions; the former had verged to within half-musket shot, when, turning round in his saddle, without checking his steed, the youth fired. The horse of the Persian reared violently, and then with one deep, convulsive spring, actually bounded from the earth, and, shot through the heart, fell dead on the instant, bearing his rider along with him, who lay stunned and senseless with the fall.

This incident for the moment retarded his pursuers, and Alexis darted forward in his flight, loading his matchlock as he proceeded.

But though confused, and perhaps checked, his antagonists were by no means dismayed; and, quickly recovering themselves, the two others having now joined the remaining horseman who first appeared in advance, as instantaneously renewed the pursuit, without even stopping an instant to ascertain the fate of their fallen companion.

Within a short distance, Alexis again fired—a faint groan told the result, as the head of the soldier, who rode the centre of the three, drooped heavily to his bosom; and who, pressing his clinched hands to his side, after a vain attempt to steady himself, fell over his saddle-bow, desperately wounded. But this second casualty had taught the pursuing party the impolicy of being thus exposed to their antagonist's unerring accuracy of aim: accordingly, on the very instant the Georgian's shot took effect, one of them, stooping over his horse, returned the fire.

Alexis had again spurred on, when a convulsive shiver passed through the frame of the animal he bestrode, who scarcely had proceeded half a dozen yards before he fell heavily to the earth. To extricate himself, and spring to his feet with his drawn sabre in his grasp, was the work of a moment; but resistance was utterly hopeless, without even including his other three antagonists, who were now fast closing upon the scene of action. A short but sharp conflict ensued; the youth was a master of his weapon, and, though hard beset on either flank by the assailing horsemen, defended himself with such vigour and resolution, that a crimson stream,

flowing from the sword-arm of his off-side adversary, proved that one of them at least had not escaped wholly scatheless; but valour, skill, and activity, were all alike unavailing against odds so disproportionate, and the result was that, after several desperate passes had been exchanged, a back-handed blow, though partially parried, (for otherwise never would he have moved more) brought the Georgian senseless to the ground, while almost at the same moment, with a piercing scream, the unhappy Miriam threw herself from her horse, and sank down in a deep swoon across the lifeless body of her ill-fated lover.

A grasp of iron tore her away, and the sabres of both were raised to despatch him, when a commanding figure spurred at full speed to the spot, and, striking up their weapons with his own, called upon them to forbear.

It was long before the unfortunate Alexis recovered, to be fully conscious of this new misfortune which had befallen him, entailing, at the same moment, such imminent peril, not merely upon himself, but his beautiful and high-minded Miriam, whose liberation, so successfully accomplished, seemed apparently but the precursor to

more certain captivity, if not a much more fearful doom.

He had momentarily revived, a short period after he fell, to find himself a prisoner, and detained at a village by the road-side, where his captors were engaged in giving directions relative to their wounded comrades, whom, it appeared, they had brought thither. Of what further transpired he retained no knowledge, as he almost immediately relapsed into insensibility, from which it was many hours ere he was perfectly aroused.

The last, the sole incident firmly and indelibly impressed upon his memory was, the figure of his betrothed stretched lifeless before him, interposing as a barrier between himself and the shining steel, with the voice of command, and the tall, martial form, whose powerful arm had turned the threatened doom aside. The sun was fast sinking below the horizon, as he became fully restored to a sense of his situation, and was enabled to observe what was passing around him.

During his swoon, the blood had been washed from his wound, and the head bandaged, everything exhibiting the sympathizing attention of

some rude yet friendly hand. He found himself fastened with saddle-girths to a horse, yet in such a manner as to cause neither pain nor inconvenience, attached to the head-stall of which a rope was held by one of two horsemen who were several yards before him; a third rode by his side; and upon the last his attention became at once riveted with the most earnest attention.

At the first glance he had recognised him as the person to whom he was indebted for his life, in saving him from the swords of his pursuers; and this circumstance engendered the more than ordinary curiosity with which he now regarded him. He was a Koord, richly attired, of gigantic height, and limbs absolutely colossal; and, though his horse was a Turcoman[1] of great bone and power, his size appeared actually diminutive beneath his herculean rider. The countenance, though somewhat wild, was by no means

[1] The Turcoman horses are of the highest value; they unite the height and strength of an English horse with the blood and spirit of the Arabian, conjoined with a hardihood and power of endurance peculiar to this breed alone. The price given for them is enormous, approaching even sometimes to £500 sterling; an immense sum, when it is considered that in this country a really good horse, with much blood, may be purchased for 60 tomauns, or £30.

bad; for, though expressive of the most indomitable resolution, it yet carried that look of mildness and forbearance so frequently found in persons of his make and figure.

As the youth regained the entire assumption of his faculties, and had completed these observations, the object of them fixed an earnest, keen, and stedfast glance upon his countenance, as, gradually closing beside him, he said, in a low and guarded tone, "Farsee megoyeed?" Do you speak Persian?

Alexis faintly articulated an answer in the affirmative.

"Then," he exclaimed aloud in the same language, as if considerably relieved by this declaration, "I can speak to you unrestrainedly, as neither of those rascals in front understand a word.[1] Listen! should you reach Erivan before the Surdar's present mood has passed away, and

[1] It is, perhaps, necessary to observe, that the whole of the wandering tribes, and almost entire population of the north of Persia, extending to the southern extremity of the province of Adzeerbidgan, are Toorks, being descendants of those hordes who have at various periods emigrated from the plains of Tartary and Turcomania, consequently among whom the Persian language is almost wholly unknown, with the exception of the higher orders and learned classes.

he is a man whose wrath does not subside in an hour, your doom is sealed; and, had you a thousand lives, they would be too small a sacrifice to his vengeance. Now, mark my words! About nightfall, or shortly afterwards, we shall pass a thick grove on the right: on making the attempt, you will find you can easily slip your hands from the strap which binds them: I will cut the rope by which these men are leading you, so far, that a strong jerk will burst it asunder. This mode is the only one by which you can secure your escape; as, if it was supposed for an instant to be the result of anything but accident, their lives, and perhaps even mine, would be the forfeit. The moment, therefore, we come abreast of the place I have named, having disengaged yourself, rein back with your whole force, and then plunge into the thicket, and leave the rest to me. Do you hear?" he continued, with a significant glance, but with well-assumed harshness, observing his followers had turned back, and were looking towards them.

The youth, at once perceiving his drift, answered in a submissive and deprecatory tone of voice, and the Koord passed onward; during

which time, Alexis, who kept an anxious and eager eye upon his motions, with a palpitating heart observed him employed in dexterously severing the cord with his poniard.

Night had closed in ere they reached the spot indicated. It was so intensely dark, that, under any other circumstances, the Georgian might have perhaps missed it; too much, however, now depended upon his watchfulness for him even to need the signal of his vigilant protector, who whispered in his ear, "May Allah speed you!"

In an instant his horse reared with agony at the sudden and desperate check he felt upon the severe and heavy curb with which he was bitted, while a shout of dismay from the soldier who held the rope told the result, as, with the rapidity of lightning, the youth plunged into the copse, and disappeared in an instant.

The Koord immediately dashed the stirrups into his horse's flanks, and, firing his pistol, darted off in pursuit, followed by his men, in the opposite direction.

In the meanwhile, the unhappy Miriam had been reconveyed to her former splendid prison. Fit followed fit, convulsion after convulsion; and the frightened attendants, who thronged the

chamber, every instant anticipated that each would be her last. Towards the afternoon she appeared more composed; the eye was fixed with a cold, vacant gaze; her breathing grew low and indistinct: all seemed to betoken her last hour as approaching.

A door opened, and the crowd of females parted deferentially aside to a beautiful and stripling form in the rich dress of a page, who advanced to the side of her couch. He took her hand, and, gazing mournfully upon the beauteous sufferer, spoke to her in the soothing voice of encouragement and kindness; but the softness and mellifluous sweetness of its tones fell unheeded and unheard upon the ears of her to whom it was addressed.

At once the sound of music from a mountain-reed floated up from below. It was that peculiarly light and graceful air, the Georgian national dance and song,[1] the notes of which, softened by the distance, came wafted with the most melodious sweetness through the apartment. Its effect upon the invalid was as sudden as it was startling; with a single bound she

[1] A gay, lively, and stirring piece of music, of which the inhabitants of the country are passionately fond.

sprang from her recumbent position, and, reaching the sill of the window, with a maniac smile looked down from the giddy height.

The glance was momentary, but enough. On the bridge which crosses the river running at the base of the rock, stood the figure of a man, who, with his outstretched arms, seemed to be bidding an eternal farewell to some ideal and visionary phantom before him. It could not be mistaken: in her estimation there was *none* other resembling it in this world. Once again her eye sought that beloved form, and was then momentarily turned towards heaven; and, while the terrified domestics gazed from one to the other, paralyzed by their fears, uttering a frenzied laugh, with the speed of lightning the unhappy girl leapt from the tremendous height!

There was a rushing sound through the air—a whirr, followed by a scream of horror that absolutely reached to the nearest suburbs of the city, and caused the startled inhabitants to wonder whence the unearthly sound proceeded.

The whole passed with so much rapidity, that the page (who alone appeared to retain any presence of mind), though he rushed forward on the instant, at the risk of sharing the same fate by

being pulled over along with her, could only catch at her muslin robe, which of course parted at once, being of too frail a material to support her weight.

Alarm and confusion now reigned throughout not only the palace but the entire fortress. Numbers rushed to the foot of the precipice; and there, with his lips glued to those of his mistress, was found the unfortunate lover, as pale and deathlike as the inanimate form he bore in his arms, which there reclined, motionless, senseless, and yet, wildly improbable as it may appear, with the exception of a few slight contusions, *unhurt!* Stopped in her downward career by two large, thick, spreading willows, (their stems are still visible,) first one, then the other—she had descended in safety![1]

A crowd now gathered round, and murmurs of pity and admiration were heard from all sides, as a small party of the Surdar's guards appeared upon the scene. But even amongst them, the ever-ready slaves of a despotic will, some slight shade of feeling was manifest; and,

[1] There was a strong hot wind blowing at the time; and many suppose that this, catching her dress, was the main cause of her safety.

gently but firmly the lifeless form of the young girl was disengaged from the embrace of her hapless lover, and delivered over to the attendants of the zenana, while he himself, at the same time, was marched off a close prisoner to the opposite side of the fortress.

Within an inner chamber, to the right of the dewan-khana,[1] and which constituted his own private apartment for secret consultation, or the despatch of business, sat the fierce and dreaded ruler of the province, on whose word or fiat depended the lives, happiness, and fortunes of thousands!

Additional sternness was visible on the broad yet contracted brow; while the deep-set, fiery eye was bent upon the rich carpet in moody and profound thought, as he inhaled the smoke of his richly-inlaid and diamond-adorned chibouque.[2]

In the room were two other persons only, apparently in attendance, on whose countenances, though so wholly dissimilar, might be equally traced an expression partaking of gloom mingled with the deepest anxiety. One of these was

[1] The grand saloon, or hall of audience. [2] Pipe.

the gigantic Koord, whom we have previously mentioned, and who, with his arms folded before him, leaned with his back against the wall at the opposite end of the apartment, facing the Surdar. The other was the Circassian page, who stood beside him, and whose rich, ornate, and close-fitting costume displayed to the highest advantage every proportion of his light, graceful, and elegant form. His, did we say? Away with the useless and unavailing disguise! gaze but a moment on those finely-carved, dark-olive features; the richly-cut yet haughty curve of that chiselled mouth, and the deep, wild lustre of those dark blue eyes — so expressive at once of a spirit of mingled waywardness and affection, of wilfulness and depth of feeling, now clouded and subdued by intense agony of mind: turn but to these, and the jetty ringlets which flow in luxuriant negligence on the neck and shoulders, and let the sex stand forth at once confessed!

The Surdar's voice now broke the silence which reigned around; its clear, firm, decided tones, expressive of resolution from which appeal was hopeless, causing a shuddering thrill to per-

vade his hearers as he exclaimed, "Bring in the prisoner!"

A deeper shade crossed the countenance of the Koord as, having hesitated for the moment, he disappeared by a side door, while the page clasped his hands (I suppose we must still term him according to his sexual costume) in agony together, and pressed them to his throbbing brow.

In a few minutes the former returned, and, guarded by two of the seraglio eunuchs, one of whom carried the fatal string, followed the unhappy Alexis. He was deadly pale, but his eye quailed not; and, if his step was feeble, it was more owing to the weakness occasioned by mental and bodily suffering than fear.

"So, young man," said the Surdar, after he had scrutinized the youth in silence for some minutes, "one attempt was not enough, but you must again violate the sanctuary of the Moslem's home; if the law of the Prophet awards the punishment of death to him who seeks the dishonour of his neighbour, is the dwelling of the prince and the noble to be less sacred and less entitled to that respect which

surrounds the habitation of the meanest peasant?"

"My lord," replied the youth, firmly but respectfully, "your slave represents for your consideration and justice, that if, in seeking the restoration of the wife of his bosom, at least of her who, in the eye of Heaven, already was such, he has infringed upon the strict principle of the Mussulman law, he was yet acting in obedience to that of the Supreme Being, before whom both Christian and Mahometan alike must bow."

"In accordance with which," said the Khan, with a sneer, "you have rashly staked life and fortune upon a cast, the almost certain failure of which engendered an equally certain doom."

"My life," said the Georgian, resolutely, but still preserving the tone of respectful deference towards the Surdar he had from the first maintained, "my life was perilled in defence of one for whom at this very moment its best blood would, with joy and gratitude, be poured forth, drop by drop, while my last thought would be a prayer of thankfulness for the sacrifice, on knowing that she — she for whom I had braved all, and for whom I felt assured my life had not

been unavailingly given—was restored in safety and honour to her parents."

The Surdar paused for some minutes before he again spoke. "Boy!" he at last exclaimed, with slow and stern deliberation, "these are the hot feelings, fresh and feverish, of youth; in after-years you would deride the folly which dictated such a sacrifice — give ear to what I now say," he continued, eyeing him with a keenness that seemed intended to pierce his very inward soul; "that slave girl *must* be mine—nay, start not—I have said it; but I hereby offer you your life and liberty, with a safe conduct to your home and country, conditionally, that you bind yourself by oath never, under any circumstances, to seek or hold communion with her more."

There was a dead pause; breathless anxiety seemed depicted on the countenances of all present. For one instant only a deep flush passed across the young man's pallid features, and then as quickly subsided, leaving them, if possible, still paler than before. It was one unworthy, though barely momentary, thought, given to his parents, and former happy home, but was as instantaneously discarded as, erect

and dignified, in a voice of the most energetic resolution, he replied—"*Never!*"

A smothered cry of anguish burst from the page as the rejoinder fell from his lips.

The Surdar frowned darkly and gloomily as he said, "'Tis well, then; your blood be upon your own head! You know the consequences, and the last offices of your religion shall be rendered to you. Call hither the Kessish (priest.)"

While one of the attendants quitted the apartment for the purpose of complying with the mandate, the page, with streaming eyes, convulsively threw himself at the tyrant's feet; a stern glance, however, repelled him, and, clasping his hands in mute agony, he resumed his former position.

The Koord, who for some minutes past had been buried in reflection, now stepped forward. "Khan," he exclaimed, in the usually plain, abrupt manner of his people, so completely at variance with the flowery rhetoric of the courtly Persian, "your clansman and faithful follower, your foster-brother and humble friend, who in devotion to your welfare and service will yield to none, and who has ever been near you in danger's front, when the battle raged the thickest,

he has a representation to make,—the first he ever proffered, and, if granted, shall be the last, and which surely will not be denied to an old and long-tried servant."

"Ya Allah!" exclaimed the Surdar, with angry impatience, "is this a time for petitions? prefer your request to-morrow, and there will be small fear of its being refused."

"To-morrow," returned the unceremonious soldier, bluntly, "will be too late; what I ask for must be granted now, and at this present moment."

The Surdar's eyes sparkled; it seemed as if his passion, hitherto with difficulty restrained, was about to burst forth with terrific violence: but he controlled himself by a violent effort, as he said sternly, "*Must!* Youssuff Beg, know you to whom you speak?"

"Ay, *must*, Khan, such is my expression. The courtly address and contemptible sycophancy of your Kuzzilbash minions, as you well know, suit neither with my habits nor disposition, and I repeat, if the boon solicited of his friend and master, by a long-tried and faithful dependant, is complied with, it must be before it is too late. Khan, I ask, I beg, as the sole re-

ward of any service I may have rendered you within the last twenty years, that this gallant youth's life may be spared."

"By the beard of the Prophet," exclaimed the Surdar, "it appears I can neither think nor act in this matter but as it shall please others to determine ...."

Further parley was here cut short by the appearance of the priest, a grave and venerable man, who, from his so quickly obeying the summons, must evidently have been retained in attendance for the occasion. A dead silence once more pervaded the chamber on his entrance, and the voice of the Khan sunk almost to a whisper, as he demanded, in a low, fearful, distinct tone, of his prisoner, "Know you that man, and for what purpose he is here?"

Proud and collected, his courage even rose the higher as his fate appeared the more inevitable; and while his eye never for one instant quailed, or his voice faltered, the youth firmly replied, "I do; and am prepared."

Not a muscle quivered, but his lips moved as if in inward prayer; he evidently regarded his doom as sealed. Long, keenly, and stedfastly the Surdar gazed upon him, till the expression

of his countenance gradually changed from its stern look of imperious command to one of wonder and admiration.

"Young man," he said, slowly and deliberately, yet kindly, "you have been severely tried; but as the purer the richer metal appears by the ordeal to which it is subjected, the higher is the reward of integrity and merit such as have been displayed by you on this trying occasion. — *You are free*, — but must abide with us a while, as your departure from this roof, without having experienced the rights of hospitality, would be as unbecoming the character of the Surdar of Erivan as Hussein the Koord. For you," he added, turning to Youssuff, "oh! father of stupidity,[1] when will that hard head imbibe any thing like sense from the quick-sighted knavery every where around you, to suppose for a moment there existed aught within my power to grant that I could refuse as a boon to one so trusty and devoted as yourself! And you, too, Shirene," he continued,

[1] A polite mode of expression, corresponding, perhaps, to our own term of a "Blackheath lion!" which classical epithet, the reader is no doubt aware, is generally applied to that animal, more sinned against than sinning—the ass!

addressing the young page,[1] and gently and affectionately taking her hand, "you, too, must needs thwart me in this matter,—(nay, turn not aside your head,)—by endeavouring to aid and assist in the escape of one in whose charms you already foresaw a rival to dispossess you of your sway. I know what you would say, by that proud conscious look—fit emblem of the wild

[1] This incident of the page will appear strange and improbable to most Eastern travellers, who are well aware of the rigidity of Oriental etiquette regarding the seclusion of females; but to this must be adduced, by way of reply, the singular character of the Surdar, whose mind once bent on any measure, whether partaking of pleasure or ambition—for he was not as unfrequently devoted to the one as he ever was to the other—no law or established custom, no matter how revered, ever stood between him and its accomplishment. The particulars regarding this young person's history were communicated one evening to the Count de N——, a fellow-traveller, and myself, by the Prince de M——o, a Georgian nobleman, who had been a frequent boon-companion of the Surdar, in the various intervals of peace, or rather armed truces, which sometimes existed on the frontier. He described her to us, as she appeared in the picturesque costume of the Caucasus, as a being of unparalleled loveliness, though of a wilful and capricious temper. She was generally supposed to be of Koordish parentage, and of the same tribe as the Surdar himself. The Khan was passionately attached to her, and her influence over him was unbounded, the which, to her honour be it said, she invariably interposed and exerted in behalf of the unfortunate.

blood and wayward spirit which distinguish you,—that higher and nobler motives actuated your conduct. Well, be it so; but, remember, it is dangerous at all times tempting, even in sport, the lion's wrath; and many, many are the actions of a momentary anger, which plant the seeds of a deep and bitter repentance hereafter, and which, too late, then would repair the evil at any sacrifice. Such was the rash nature of your ill-timed interference, which might have cost this gallant youth his life, as well as entailed an endless train of misery upon many others. And now, reverend sir," he concluded, turning to the priest, "it remains but for me to desire you will at once proceed to the business for which you have been summoned hither."

He signed to the attendants, who quitted the apartment, but shortly afterwards returned, leading by the hand a richly-attired, but veiled, female figure.

The Surdar arose, and advancing courteously towards her, withdrew the covering, and revealed the features of Miriam! pallid still, yet lovelier than ever, with those full, large, dark, speaking orbs, beaming with love and tenderness

for the moment towards her lover, and then turned in bashful confusion upon the ground.

"The laws of the Christian," said the Khan, while a smile, crossing his harsh features, lighted them with an expression approaching to benevolence, "require that the parents or guardian of the maiden give their attendance on an occasion like the present. In the latter capacity I now officiate; the bridegroom's offering having also been duly cared for."

An eunuch approached, bearing a massive silver tray, on which lay several shawls of the highest value, with a chaplet of large and beautiful pearls. The latter was placed on the brow of the young girl, and the Surdar, drawing a diamond ring from his finger, handed it to the priest; then, taking her hand, and placing it in that of her bewildered lover, who regarded the whole proceeding as if in a dream, he said, "Now do your office."

The sacred rite was soon performed, and then only did Alexis recover to a full sense of his glorious and unexpected good fortune.

The newly-married couple threw themselves at the feet of their benefactor, and, while the youth vainly strove to falter forth his acknow-

ledgments, Miriam seized the Khan's hand, and covered it with kisses and tears of joy. It was a scene that touched even the apathetic slaves of the harem, accustomed as they must have been to many a sight of woe; hysteric sobs burst from the page, and the rough soldier turned away to hide his feelings. But for *him*, that dark, stern-visaged chieftain, the cause of this sudden change from a scene of misery and sorrow to one of happiness and joy, as he glanced upon the kneeling couple, a convulsive spasm crossed his features for the moment (perhaps the first and last ever witnessed on that fierce countenance), but was almost as instantaneously repressed, leaving it calm, severe, and inscrutable as before, though his voice had less of harshness than usual in its tones, as, on quitting the apartment, he gave orders to Youssuff to have a select party of horse in readiness the following morning to escort *his guests* in all honour and safety beyond the frontier to the Russian outposts.

The interior of the fort presents little worthy of notice, with the exception of a very handsome mosque, built by the Turks previous to their expulsion by Shah Abbas the Great, and the palace

of the Surdar, which now forms the residence of the general officer commanding the district, and which, standing upon the side opening towards the precipice and river, and commanding a beautiful view of the surrounding country, is a very extensive building, many of the apartments of which are richly and ornately adorned, the handsomest among them being the saloon, or hall of audience, which, in some measure permitted to fall to decay, from the expensive material of which it was composed, in anticipation of the Emperor's visit in 1837, was thoroughly repaired, and restored to its original splendour.

It is hung with superb lustres, and composed entirely of mirrorwork, with the exception of several niches in the walls, which are filled up with some roughly-executed but not badly-designed portraits, conspicuous among which is that of the redoubted Surdar himself, taken when in the prime of life, and which is said to be a most admirable likeness. It represents a tall, thin, but evidently powerful man, wearing a short, thick, tufted black beard, with a countenance in which indomitable resolution seems to be the leading characteristic.

The next morning, having been furnished with letters for the Patriarch and the Procureur de l'Empereur, I started on a visit to the celebrated church and convent of Eutch-Kulissee, or Eutch-Miazin, for it is known by both names, which in the Turkish and Armenian languages means a literal signification of the Three Churches.

I found, on my arrival, the Patriarch was confined to his chamber by severe illness; the Procureur, however, was obliging enough to conduct me over the whole range of buildings. As it has been so minutely described at different periods by various eminent travellers, I may mention that the entire structure possesses little beyond its great antiquity to interest the beholder; it more resembles a fortress than anything partaking of a clerical character, till, passing the massive gate, you enter the churchyard, in which, by the by, the most interesting object to an Englishman is a beautiful white marble tablet, erected to the memory of the late Sir John Macdonald, of Kinneir, British minister to the court of Persia during the Russian war of 1826.

The establishment boasts of several reliques, the most reverenced among them being a spear,

said to be the very same with which the Roman soldier pierced the side of our Saviour on the cross.

I returned to Erivan the same evening, and the following morning resumed my route, passing in the early part of the day the Lake of Sivan, a sheet of water of considerable extent, on a small desolate rock, on which is situated an old, dark, and gloomy-looking church, evidently of the same date as those at Eutch-Miazin, and which is, I believe, generally used as a place of confinement for the priesthood for offences of an ecclesiastical nature.

It was on the second day on my departure from Erivan, when about fifty miles distant, that the nature of the country, hitherto flat, wearisome, and uninteresting, on descending through a narrow pass into the valley of Diligan, suddenly changed its character, and became all at once surpassingly beautiful.

In the centre meandered a clear stream of excellent water, diversified at different points into a variety of miniature waterfalls ; on every side rose clusters of superb trees, so admirably grouped together, that it was almost impossible to believe it was the sole work of nature, alto-

gether unassisted by art (yet so it was), while the wild rose, clover, primrose, and other flowers, grew in luxuriant abundance around.

I flung myself upon the turf, and for upwards of an hour could not again put foot in the stirrup; on eventually remounting, however, I found, as I proceeded, the singular loveliness of the scene anything but diminish.

I passed several military outposts, and parties of the soldiery employed in repairing the road, which in several places had been broken by the force of the mountain torrents. They belonged to a regiment, the head-quarters of which were stationed six versts to the right of the village, which formed my halting-place for the night.

The march of the following morning increased considerably in interest, maintaining throughout as great a degree of scenic beauty as that of the preceding day; while, in addition, its character became of a sublimer nature, partaking more of the higher and majestic qualities of the Alps or Pyrenees.

Tempted by the rich prospect everywhere around me, and accompanied by two confidential domestics, I quitted the highroad, and wandered —wandered till I found I had lost the road, and

that too without any possibility whatever of regaining it, all our attempts to find a track leading to it proving wholly unavailing. The sun was fast setting; in another hour it would be dark; and we had every prospect before us of being benighted on the hills; this would have been little or nothing, had we possessed any provant wherewith to have satisfied our hunger, which a long ride had sharpened to a most immoderate extent; unfortunately, however, all our foresight had not taught us to be provided for a contingency like the present; though, not to resign all hope, we set about ascertaining the probability, if we could not trace a path leading to the road, of there being any village in our immediate neighbourhood, where we could procure some provision and shelter till the morning.

All our efforts, however, proved vain; darkness was fast closing around us, and we were about to relinquish all hope in despair, when, from the ridge where we stood, I observed a volume of smoke curling upwards from a grove on our left, some hundred and fifty yards below us. We rode down, and, approaching unperceived, discovered it proceeded from a very numerous

party of wandering Tartars, who were encamped on the spot.

The first idea of my followers was to retreat; nor did it appear they at all relished the propinquity of our nomade friends, whose reputation throughout the country on the doctrine of appropriation, I must candidly confess, would not perhaps have stood the minutest scrutiny in the world; but this measure I by no means approved of, and that for several reasons.

In the first place, we had been in the saddle almost since daylight, a period of nearly thirteen hours; secondly, our horses were dead-beat, and could not have gone much farther, and as they were of some value, and my sole property, I was naturally a little sensitive on this point; and thirdly, and lastly, (and, if the truth must be told, the most powerful reason of all), because my eye had detected, at the first glance, the hind-quarters of a fine fat sheep, hanging by the legs to a triangle formed of some of the lances of the tribe; while the savoury smell of a delicious pilau, which it was utterly impossible for the veriest stoic in the world to resist, came directly across my olfactory nerves, from

an enormous caldron on the fire, (the smoke from which had first announced to us the near proximity of our wandering neighbours) with double files of most inviting kabobs roasting by the same.

However much my companions might have demurred to my reasoning at first, there was no standing the last, the steam of which had invaded their own nostrils, and in an instant banished every other thought from their imagination, with the exception of an eager desire to partake of such good cheer.

Accordingly, trotting forward, as I approached him whom I had previously marked out as their chief, I sprang from my saddle, and in a bold, confident tone, (the best mode of covering one's actual fright,) gave him the "salam aleikum," which he, although evidently a good deal surprised at my unexpected appearance, immediately returned.

Several fine, dashing-looking fellows now gathered round us; and, having explained our situation, we were welcomed with the utmost cordiality.

In a short time, our horses being carefully attended to, and well provided for, the evening

meal was served; and never do I remember seeing ampler justice done to any entertainment, (most certainly on my part;) and although, both before and since, I have been in many wild and striking scenes, which have led me into the society of rather odd persons, this evening is one that will never be erased from my recollection.

The chief was a fine athletic figure, in the prime of life, as were most of his followers; but there was one among them who particularly attracted my attention, and who appeared the wildest of the wild, even among that wild set. He was the adopted son of the head of the tribe, extremely young, tall, and powerfully made, with a large black eye, expressive at once of the highest good-humour, and a *poco curante*, devil-me-care sort of look, which formed a singular contrast to the rather sedate countenances of his companions. In lieu of a turban, he wore a Greek skull-cap, which, in the rakish and jaunty manner it was set on one side of his head, was peculiarly becoming to his features.

He was, they informed me, by birth, a Lesguee, a native of the Eastern Caucasus, and appeared to be a general favourite, though how

he came amongst those with whom I found him I could not ascertain.

Our supper finished, after some conversation over a comfortable pipe and cup of coffee, I stretched myself in my cloak, with my feet to the fire, and in a few minutes fell fast asleep.

I was awoke at sunrise by the chief, who with three or four of his followers were ready prepared to conduct me on my journey. Our route lay through a country exactly similar to that which I had passed on the two previous days, till it diverged into the plains in the vicinity of Teflis. My black-bearded friends, their leader informed me, were of a powerful tribe, originally from the Crimea, but, since the cession and subjugation of that province in the time of the Empress Catherine, scattered in different branches from the shores of the Caspian, up to the frontiers of Poland.

A sudden turn now brought us into the high road, close beside a sign-post marked with the imperial colours,[1] and inscribed as being only twelve versts from the city, the towers and spires of which the chief pointed out to my

[1] Black, white, and orange. All barriers, bridges, &c., are thus coloured.

attention, and, mentioning there was now no further need of his attendance, and that for particular reasons he wished to escape the notice of any passing travellers, gave me a cordial "Khodah sakhlah!" (God preserve you!), which I as warmly returned, and in a few minutes he was out of sight. An hour's ride brought me to the city.

The first thing, on my arrival, was to proceed, with my passport and letters of introduction, to the residence of M. de Rodofinikin, the chef de la diplomacie, or head of the political department,—a gentleman whose name will ever be proverbial for his attention and hospitality to all strangers, and, above all, I may say, to every English traveller whose footsteps may have led him to the Georgian capital. It is scarcely necessary for me to remark, that I formed no exception to this general rule, and, with his house, table, and establishment open to me at all hours and at all times in the society of himself and his amiable lady, I experienced a warmth of kindness and cordiality any feeble efforts of mine at description never could sufficiently portray or express.

But to continue.—The following morning,

(Sunday), I accompanied this gentleman to be introduced to the Governor-General at his levee. I was received with the utmost politeness, and, having been presented by himself to the circle of general officers by whom he was surrounded, received an invitation to join him again at dinner.

The hour appointed was that of four, and, punctual to the time, I proceeded to the palace; the company were fast assembling when I arrived, and consisted of all the general and superior officers in Teflis, with the various heads of departments, in all to the number of about thirty. A military band, from one of the regiments quartered in the capital, played in a balcony adjoining the saloon during the time; and the appearance of the assembled guests, all in full dress, and many wearing the jewelled insignia of the various orders of the empire, presented a *tout ensemble*, at once equally pleasing and imposing.

After dinner we adjourned to the gardens of the palace, which, since the arrival of General Golovine, (who had recently succeeded the Baron Rosen in the government of the Cauca-

sus) had been thrown open to the public as a holiday resort and public promenade.

On the present occasion they were filled with a well-dressed assembly, in the costumes of Europe and Asia, and conspicuous among whom (and the object certainly the most interesting to one who, like myself, had been so long absent from any reunion of the kind) were numbers of elegant females, as remarkable for their personal attractions as the taste and judgment with which their toilettes (whether in their splendid national costume, or *à la Parisienne*) were arranged.

The following day I was occupied in paying the usual visits to the civil and military governors, and the Chef d'Etat Major. The latter, General Kotzebue, son of the celebrated and highly-distinguished dramatist, is esteemed, and deservedly so, a first-rate officer, having risen at a very early age to his present high rank and station; his invariable attention and politeness towards myself personally, on all occasions, will not easily be forgotten.

I may here pause to make a few remarks upon travelling in Russia. The voyager should

remember (above all, if he is in the army or navy) that he is in a decidedly military country, so much so, indeed, as in this particular not to have any other resembling it throughout the world. In Austria, Prussia, and even in France, military rank has invariably been found to be the best passport, in society as well as in travelling; but in Russia any other is wholly disregarded, if not in some measure (unless in the higher branches of diplomacy) despised. The first act, therefore, of a naval or military officer journeying through any part of the Muscovite dominions, and stopping at any town or city, though he intend staying merely for four-and-twenty hours, should be immediately to wait upon, and report his arrival to, the governor or commandant of the district, in uniform.

By this simple method, a compliment to the usages of the country, he creates a feeling favourable not only to himself personally, but towards his compatriots, who may subsequently take a similar route; he is materially assisted in whatever object he may have in view on his journey; and, above all, is exempt from those petty annoyances and extortions which will most

assuredly follow his neglecting to adhere to the rule I have mentioned.

In stating the necessity of his doing this in uniform, I may observe, that wearing plain clothes on such an occasion would be regarded as a slight, bordering upon actual insult to the authority to whom the visit was made; as, in a government like the Russian, where the military costume, and no other, under any circumstances whatever, is permitted to be worn by all ranks in the service, an officer appearing in any other dress would be quite beyond their comprehension. Those of our own army, who have served in India, will easily understand this feeling, where a similar rule is observed.

Another thing worthy of observation is, that much depends very often upon the personal character of the authorities with whom the traveller is brought in contact, as, should they be of that mercenary and unprincipled stamp—which description of person is by no means confined to the lower order of Russian officials—the voyager, above all an Englishman, will find himself watched, thwarted, and annoyed in a thousand different ways (as was recently the case in Georgia, during the administration of

the Baron Rosen), and this for various reasons, not the least among which is, that, aware of the Emperor's habit of sometimes questioning travellers presented to him, as to what they have witnessed in his dominions, they well know (for in no part of the world is the individual English character for honesty and integrity so much respected, and its reputation for these qualities so widely circulated, as in Russia) that, in the event of this occurring to one of our bull-headed, straightforward Anglo-Saxon breed, plump out it comes, a plain unvarnished tale.

But to continue. A few evenings after my arrival, I was invited by M. and Madame Rodofinikin to accompany them in a stroll through the Government Botanical Gardens, which are situated on and at the foot of the hill where stands the old fortress, now fast crumbling to ruin. They are laid out with considerable taste, and carefully attended to. The ascent was a task far more difficult than my respected friend, his excellency, who was somewhat pursy in his figure, had calculated upon, for, on reaching the top, he sat down perfectly exhausted, and blowing like a grampus.

The view from the summit was superb; its

various beauties being considerably heightened by the bright and gorgeous colours of a southern sunset. On the one side lay the gardens, beyond which again rose a scene at once wild and picturesque, while, on the other, the city, with its suburbs and gardens, lay stretched before us like a map.

Teflis is fast changing its character and appearance to the aspect of a European town; handsome buildings and wide streets are everywhere arising; and it is probable that, before many years more are past, but little vestige of its Asiatic character will remain. I have used the term European, from the circumstance that all cities of modern origin in the Russian empire have been constructed on a very different scale to the ancient and primitive buildings—neither European nor Asiatic, but a mixture of both, which forms the chief order of architecture in the old Muscovite towns.

On quitting the gardens, we came upon a party of eight or ten brilliantly-equipped horsemen, in full Circassian costume. One, in advance of the rest, evidently their chief, was a fine, tall, dark, soldierlike person, richly attired, as indeed were all his followers, and the whole

mounted on horses of the first blood and spirit. These were the first warriors of the Caucasus I had hitherto fallen in with; and the impression this small band were likely to make upon the mind of a stranger, relative to their countrymen, was certainly one of the highest order as regarded their martial appearance and military prowess. My Persian servant, who was walking beside me, whispered that it was a celebrated Lesgian chief, with his attendants, who had recently given in his adhesion to the Russian government, after a long, protracted, and sanguinary struggle, and only then from the utter impossibility of further resistance.

On the morning of the 8th of June, I accompanied M. Marcosoff, the correspondent of the English consul at Erzeroom,[1] to a small moun-

[1] It is somewhat singular, but in the interior of the entire vast empire of Russia there is not a single agent of the British Government—not even at Moscow, where every petty Italian state has a consul-general, and where, in addition to the shoals of travellers who arrive each year in that city (the real capital of Russia), there is a great number of English residents by whom the loss is severely felt, and which, moreover, causes some trouble to the Sardinian consul, who is invariably applied to, but on whom a person has no claim whatever beyond this gentleman's having been a long time resident in England, and from the circumstance of his being married to an English lady. The

tain village, a short distance from Teflis, to witness the celebration of the fête of St. Gregoire. It was an animated spectacle; for, apparently, not merely the whole of the city, but the entire population for many miles round, in their holiday costume, must have been assembled; nor, although a scene of joyousness and relaxation, was business altogether neglected, as booths arose in every direction, containing sweetmeats and refreshments of various kinds, as well as rich arms, shawls, cutlery, and every description of merchandize from both East and West.

On one side might be seen groups of beautiful

same may be said, in a lesser degree, of Teflis; and, though the gentleman I have named in this city, like Mr. G——r at Moscow, is but too happy to render any assistance in his power, and pay every attention to the passing traveller, is it fair, or indeed is it becoming, in a nation like Great Britain, that its nobility, gentry, or merchants, on any emergency arising, should be looking to strangers to undertake what it is the bounden duty of the Government to appoint a representative of their own to look after?—or, what is more likely to be the actual reason, that its ministers should be so cramped by a popular and mistaken clamour for economy as not to possess the ability of having proper agents in places, where, in addition to what I have already mentioned, some interests of a serious nature, belonging to the country at large, might be endangered, from there being no proper authority at hand to watch over and protect them?

dancing-girls, figuring in the slow and graceful movement of the country, or exhibiting the more active and vigorous steps of the Circassian, or rather Lesgian, dance—which, by-the-by, I should not omit to mention, forms as nearly as possible a counterpart of our Highland Fling [1]—while, in another, a tribe of tumblers and jugglers are drawing the attention of a gaping and admiring crowd to their various feats and antics.

The church, dedicated to the saint, stands perched on a projecting ledge of rock almost at its summit. By far the most interesting and impressive object it contains is a sarcophagus, erected to the memory of the talented and unfortunate Grebayedoff, who, nominated as ambassador to the court of the Shah, on the

[1] The Count de N——e and myself were together in Persia, Georgia, and Circassia, and afterwards at St. Petersburg, where I left him, at the expiration of 1838, on being ordered to England. When we next met, it was in London, at the Caledonian ball, July, 1840, after my second return from Constantinople. I shall ever remember his expression of surprise on witnessing the first reel, where the noblest and fairest of our northern aristocracy were footing it away right merrily, as, turning to me, he said, "Why, your national dance is the same as that which we witnessed in the Circassian mountains."

conclusion of the late war, from an injudicious exercise of authority causing an infringement upon the Mahomedan law and usages, was, with the whole of his suite, and escort, with the exception of two persons, murdered in cold blood by the bigoted and fanatic population of Téhèran.[1]

The time passed gaily; and though at one period some apprehension was entertained from a portentous and lowering aspect in the heavens, the bursting of which would have sadly disarranged the gay costumes of the assembled multitude, it fortunately blew over.

Some few days after this a great sensation was excited throughout the city by an event, which, while it excited the fears of some, and the indignation of others at the boldness and audacity with which it was effected, was productive of some sly and secret mirth among all parties.

The incident to which I allude was the plunder, by a tribe of wandering Tartars, of a go-

[1] For a full and graphic account of this unfortunate affair the reader is referred to Blackwood's Magazine, in which it appeared in 1837—I believe, in the August and September numbers, but cannot be certain.

vernment commissary, who, with a very slight escort, was proceeding from the southward towards Teflis in charge of a considerable amount of specie for the imperial treasury—and, alas the while! sundry heavy bags of ducats, the produce, it was whispered, of his own incessant labours for many years past in the various little acts of bribery, extortion, and abstraction.

Within six versts of the city, from a small valley to the left of the road, a number of men, who it was evident had being lying in wait for the purpose among the thick bushes at the entrance, suddenly sprang upon the Cossacks, wholly unprepared for such an occurrence, when, before a single lance could be levelled or a sabre drawn, the whole were pulled from their horses, and lay gagged and bound upon the ground—which done, with the addition of a few hearty kicks to the prostrate soldiery by way of admonition to keep quiet, the depredators proceeded, with the utmost deliberation, to rifle the treasure-chest of its contents—telling the commissary, that, as they well knew how the money had been obtained, they were only transferring it to those who had an equal, if not superior right, to it as

his sovereign and himself; though, doubtless, he could not but feel highly gratified, as well as honoured, in sharing any calamity which happened to his imperial master.

This was cruel mockery to the commissary, who, whatever may have been the strength of his feelings of loyalty, must have imagined the present occasion for displaying them to be extremely ill-timed, and there is every reason to believe would have infinitely preferred the Emperor's possessing an entire monopoly of the whole adventure to himself.

From the Rev. Mr. Deittrich, the officiating clergyman of the German colony in the environs of Teflis, I gathered some description of the marauders; from which it became but too evident that they were the very same tribe who, the night previous to my arrival at Teflis, had displayed so much kindness and hospitality towards myself; and whom, the pastor further informed me, emboldened by the supineness and maladministration of the Baron Rosen, had carried their predatory habits and excursions to a height unparalleled—levying tribute on the surrounding country, and attacking and plundering

even the largest and most populous villages who refused compliance with their self-invested right and authority.

I remember, in the spring of 1839, on my return from St. Petersburg, meeting and becoming acquainted, at the Burlington Hotel, with a fellow-traveller, who had also just arrived from a tour in Spain, Greece, Turkey, and Asia Minor, and who mentioned to me that he thought if a list of some of my friends and foreign acquaintance was published to the world, it would certainly make people stare a little. However, "it's an ill wind," as the old proverb says; and, possibly, after perusing an account of the above-mentioned incident, his observation may appear to be not without some foundation.

During my stay at Teflis, I had an opportunity of remarking the astute policy of the Russian government in their intercourse with Asiatics, and towards which, in a similar manner, it would be well for our own government in some measure to give their attention; as, however trivial to those unacquainted with Eastern habits and customs it may appear, in reality it is a subject for consideration of more than ordinary import, since it has been truly observed

that moderation in all communications with Oriental states and governments is invariably mistaken, either for cowardice or inability to resent insult and aggression, unless they have previously felt and acknowledged the reverse.[1]

On the 13th of June a special envoy reached Teflis, despatched by the Seraskier Pacha of Erzeroom, to congratulate the Governor-General on his assuming charge of his government. The following morning was fixed for his reception, and the studied care and attention that it should be one calculated to convey a suitable impression of the power of Russia was manifest throughout. The square in front of the palace was

[1] I think it is Morier who observes, not merely upon the policy, but the necessity and importance, of receiving the first visit of an Eastern ambassador in a court of more than usual splendour; and mentions the circumstance of the former Persian minister to England, Meerza Abdul Hussein Khan, whose respect for the English name and power was greatly diminished on being admitted to a private audience with our late revered sovereign, George III., to deliver his credentials, from the total absence of all the pomp and ceremony he had been accustomed to on similar occasions in his own country; and it was not till some time after, when he had visited the various arsenals and dockyards, &c., that he began to form a true estimate of the wealth, strength, and resources of Great Britain.

occupied by troops, in advance of whom stood a guard of honour with their band. The grand saloon was filled with officers, both of the regular army and otherwise—the Cossack, the Osmanli, the Georgian, Circassian, and Persian —all in their richest costumes and court uniforms; while, in a second room, were stationed the field officers and civilians of a corresponding rank; beyond whom, again, in a third chamber, was the Governor-General in person, surrounded by his brilliant staff, and the various authorities and general officers serving under his command.

It was not difficult to perceive that the desired effect was speedily produced; the passionless and well-schooled features of the Osmanli exhibiting a momentary astonishment at the splendid spectacle which met his view on every side. He was accompanied by a grave and solemn-looking personage—a moolah—and a young man, wearing the uniform of the Nizam Djeddítt, who spoke French with the utmost fluency.

On delivering his credentials, he made a short complimentary address, to which the General returned a suitable reply; and, after a short period of formal conversation, the assembly broke up.

At the dinner given to the envoy the same day, I was personally introduced to him by the Governor-General, and sat beside him: he seemed perfectly *au fait* to the etiquette of the table, and it struck me, on more than one occasion, seemed to regard the rich wines that were continually handed round with considerable earnestness, and then turned a rueful glance of awe and apprehension towards the leaden features of the old moolah, who was seated opposite. At length, as the sharp crack of a bottle of champagne almost drove him to the verge of desperation, in the mental conflict between inclination and adherence to the laws of the Prophet, with the utmost gravity, I asked him if he would not take a glass of ginger beer! He cast a look of comic gratitude towards me for the suggestion, and immediately assented. The ice of ceremony, or rather of conscience, being thus broken, bumper after bumper disappeared, with a rapidity that fully convinced me (if, indeed, I had previously entertained any doubt upon the subject), that this was by no means the first infraction of the Mussulman law, regarding forbidden things, on the part of his Excellency, who evidently was anything but a novice, and

imbibed the sparkling fluid with a gusto that would have become any infidel in Christendom.

I must not omit to mention that the baths of the city cannot be surpassed even by those of Constantinople. The water is of a mixed mineral character, though mostly impregnated with sulphur, and of a heat amply sufficient for the purpose, without even the least assistance from art, while they have also the additional recommendation of being remarkably clean and well kept.

CHAPTER II.

Teflis — Grand Fête and Parade on the return of the Regiment of Mussulman Cavalry from Warsaw—Observations on the Russian Military.

A few days after my arrival at Teflis, an event took place which first led to the long-wished-for opportunity of my beholding a considerable body of the Russian soldiery under arms, and that too under circumstances which, though I have since beheld, and upon the same parade, *en masse*, ten times the number of those at present assembled, I am led to believe could not have more opportunely occurred for affording me an insight into the efficiency and capability of the military service of this vast empire, since they were composed of troops not engaged in the ordinary routine of garrison or cantonment duty, but actively and laboriously employed, the

greater part of the year, against a fierce, energetic, and enterprising enemy.

The incident to which I allude was the return of the regiment of Mussulman cavalry of the Caucasus to their native country.

This corps, which excited so much wonder and attention among the foreign officers present at the grand review at Kalisch, in 1835, from their picturesque, Asiatic costumes, their mode of warfare, and *tout ensemble* so entirely different from all and everything around them, was the first military body raised by Russia in her southern Caucasian provinces, and were engaged, organized, and equipped as a standing body of irregular cavalry on exactly similar principles to those russalahs, or regiments, serving under the British Government of India, each man receiving a certain standard of pay for horse, arms, and accoutrements, the entire of which were furnished at his sole charge.

A two days' fête and rejoicing was to mark the event of the soldiers' return, and their disbandment to their homes; they having been relieved by a similar number of their countrymen at Warsaw.

On the morning of the 12th June, the day

which had been previously notified by their commander as that which would mark their arrival, I was invited by the Governor-General, with his usual urbanity and kindness, to be present; and, accordingly, about nine o'clock, proceeded to the viceregal palace. The General, surrounded by his brilliant staff, the civil and military authorities, and commanding officers of regiments, was standing in a balcony overlooking the parade in front, on which were drawn up four companies of infantry, as a guard of honour, with their band, to receive and welcome the returning soldiery. The ground was kept by a party of Cossacks of the Don, beyond whom stood a quintuple line of carriages, drotskies, and britchkas, filled with elegant and beautifully dressed women, some in their splendid national costume, others in the extremity of the *modes de Paris*. Brilliant and superbly-equipped cavaliers, also, in the picturesque attire of the Georgian, the Persian, and the Osmanli, mounted on magnificently-caparisoned horses, dashed up and down the gay throng; while, beyond, the mass of heads seemed to rise in countless myriads.

The distant sound of military music now burst

upon the ear, and announced the approach of the regiment. It gradually neared, and, at length, preceded by a troop of Cossacks of the Line, who wheeled right and left on either flank, they marched upon the parade, saluting the General as they passed, the infantry presenting arms, and the band playing the national anthem of "God save the Emperor," while one tremendous shout, which rose from the vast multitude, seemed to shake the earth.

Arrived upon the ground, they wheeled up into line, the General descending into the square, accompanied by us all, and followed by two attendants, each bearing a small tray filled with crosses of honour, and gold and silver medals.

As we passed down the front, but one feeling pervaded me, as I gazed on the line of soldiery, and that was, disappointment! The costumes, varied and of all colours, with the long matchlocks, and other Asiatic arms and appointments, might have proved of some attraction, certainly, had I come from the West; but, after a three years' tour and residence in the East, the novelty was past, and, looking only to their efficiency for the service in which they were required, I must

candidly confess my opinion fell to a very low ebb. That the horses would be jaded and out of condition from their long march, I might have been led to expect (although that had been performed by very easy stages;) but I certainly did not look to behold the squalid, stunted, and miserable set of hacks, of which the generality of the horses of the corps seemed to be composed;[1] and, as I glanced upon my friends of the Line, I could not help thinking that, although not one-fourth their numerical strength, they, or a similar number of my old friend Skinner's Horse, would very soon have sent the whole to the right about.

Having passed down the ranks, the General returned to the front, when, both flanks having wheeled up so as to form three sides of a square, he addressed them in a short, energetic speech (which was translated to them in Tartar-Turkish by an interpreter), in which he thanked them

[1] I have since heard that by far the greater number of the horses, being the property of the riders, had been sold on their quitting Warsaw: their period of duty being finished on their leaving that city, it became an object of some importance with the men to dispose of their horses where very large prices would be given for them, in comparison with what they would receive in their own country on their return.

for their service, in the name of the Emperor; exhorted them to future good conduct and loyalty to their sovereign; and then, calling upon those recommended as the most deserving to advance, placed upon their breasts the various decorations and medals awarded them, the guard presenting arms and the band playing the national anthem; they then wheeled back into line, and, having once more passed and saluted the General, the ceremony ended.

The afternoon was appointed for a grand review (including the details of an action) of the troops in garrison, increased by the addition of all the outposts in the neighbourhood that could be conveniently called in.

They consisted of about three thousand infantry, the head-quarters of a pulk of Cossacks of the Line, a squadron of that of the Don, the Mussulman cavalry, the various contingents of irregular horse from Karabaugh, Erivan, &c., &c., under their respective chieftains, and eight guns, 9 and 6-pound field-pieces.

Of the Mussulman cavalry I have already spoken, and very few words will suffice to describe the other irregulars, who, with the exception of their leaders, were the veriest rabble

ever brought together. In the artillery, too, I must confess, I was disappointed. The guns in themselves were bad enough, awkward, clumsy, and heavy, and though the men were as fine a body as the most fastidious military critic would wish to behold, the entire matériel was indifferent in the extreme, and still worse served, not to be mentioned, indeed, in comparison with the artillery of any state in Europe that I had previously witnessed; and there are very few, even among the smaller ones, that I have not.[1] On

[1] I was informed that, during the viceroyalty of the celebrated Yermoloff, himself an artillery officer, that this branch of the army was the most efficient of the whole, and that it fell into its present decayed state, like all other departments of the government where money was to be obtained, (as, of all the large sums awarded towards maintaining its efficiency, a mere trifle only was ever appropriated to the purpose,) only during the period of the Baron Rosen's administration, that season of pillage, bribery, and misrule, on the part of all ranks of Russian officials, (with few, few indeed, honourable exceptions,) from the highest to the lowest. Timely, indeed, was the Emperor's visit, which, by the salutary example made of some of the offenders, and the unceremonious dismissal of others, beginning with their chief, restored some degree of order. In addition to the supersession of the government of the Baron Rosen, by the severe, perhaps, but firm, just, and vigorous administration of General Golovine, at the period I was at Teflis, a special commission was sitting, presided over by the senator,

the infantry and Line Cossacks I shall remark as I proceed in my narrative. I had previously determined, from my intimacy with the Hetman, and having been so much among the latter, to fall in and do duty with them on the occasion; and, having been warned of the possibility of some exceeding rough play during the *melée*, took the precaution of previously carefully examining my gallant horse's appointments, and the noble animal himself. He was a bright bay, of the Turcoman breed, standing upwards of fifteen hands, with the strength of a bull and the spirit of a lion, and withal disciplined and trained to perfection.

The order of the day was a species of conflict partaking more of the character of a guerilla warfare than the ordinary routine of a regular and disciplined force, consisting of a rapid succession of attacks and retreats on the one side; while defensive resistance, or a sudden and combined onset of the whole body, formed the lead-

Baron Hahn, (a nobleman no less remarkable for his public merit than his private worth,) the members of which traversed the country in every direction, for the purpose of inquiring into and redressing the grievances of all parties.

ing characteristics of the other: this mode of action being that in which the troops were constantly engaged with their mountain adversaries of the Caucasus.

The conflict began by a variety of movements on the part of the infantry, in two massive columns, covered by their guns, and the Mussulman and irregular cavalry—the Cossacks of the Line and Don personating the assailants; and a finer or more magnificent body of men than the former were never under arms; solid and steady as a wall, they moved more like some well-organized and admirably-ordered machine than a mass of living life, and a single glance would at once have informed a practised beholder of the invaluable qualities of the Russian soldier, and of what, under brave and skilful officers, he is capable of performing—patient, docile, and enduring, it may be said he is composed of a material not to be met with in any other country but his own. Wholly and entirely different, in point of character, to his chivalrous and impetuous Gallic adversary—and still more opposed to that dogged, fierce, and lion-hearted energy, which renders the Briton, when worsted, and turned at all points, more

formidable than ever[1]— the qualities he is possessed of may yet be said to render him, in some respects, superior to them both.

During these movements, the warriors of the Line sustained the part of the assailants, with a degree of skill and enterprise that displayed their matchless horsemanship and unrivalled knowledge of light warfare;—now threatening the massive column before them—then, all at once, with the rapidity of lightning, rushing upon the artillery, and again, as if by magic, breaking off into single files, and discharging their long guns,[2] they advanced, or retreated,

[1] I have heard many French officers assert that, in the retreats to Corunna and from Burgos, when all order and discipline appeared to be lost in the British ranks, the slightest prospect of an engagement produced, as if by magic, the immediate restoration of both; the officers, who the moment before appeared wholly without the slightest authority or control, being obeyed upon the instant, as if upon the parade.

[2] In reference to the carbine and pistol in use in our own army,—which, I think, experience has shown, as regards the former, to be productive of very little utility, and the latter none at all,—I trust I may venture to hazard an observation, which may merit some consideration from the authorities in England, as to the importance of arming some regiments of light cavalry with long, but VERY LIGHT, pieces—something similar to the artillery fusil. Napoleon, towards the close of his eventful career, was fully convinced of the advantages ac-

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keeping their adversaries perpetually on the alert, and utterly ignorant where the next onslaught would be made.

I have spoken but little of the Cossacks of

cruing from such a measure; and, accordingly, in his campaigns in France, in 1814, several regiments of chasseurs were provided with them. From the number being so limited, and the time of their being brought into play of so confined a period, but very little is known as to what was the result of the experiment. There are, however, many Austrian officers now living who can attest as to how severely on several occasions they smarted from it, when, linking bridles, they performed the duties of light infantry. If worsted, they galloped off; whereas, if the heavy column on which they were practising as a target threw out its skirmishers to repel them, down they were, sabring away, in a twinkling. On the present occasion, the game might have been repeated to a murderous extent. The Cossack pieces, not one-third the weight of the infantry musket, carried equally as far; and the men were on and off their horses with an agility, dexterity, and rapidity, which baffles all description. Another thing worthy of observation was the admirable disposition of the pistol, which, placed in the belt, is fastened to a cord that passes round the body by the left shoulder, over which it is thrown after being fired, without the least hindrance or detriment to the horseman, till he can conveniently replace it. In reference to this, it should be remembered how repeatedly, after an action of cavalry with us, the men have been found to have lost their pistols; and that, too, not from any fault of their own, but from being compelled, the moment it was discharged, to grasp the sabre to resist an assailant, which necessarily obliged them to drop the weapon, from being unable to return it to the holster.

the Don, partly from their being so few in number, and partly that they may be scarcely said to merit any particular observation: but I may here remark, from what I have subsequently seen, that they are greatly inferior to their brethren of the Line, as well as those of the Black Sea. Nor does this observation arise from any unjust partiality towards the former, consequent to my having passed so much time among them, and for days and weeks been out with them in the chase, partaking of their bread, and a regular inmate of their huts—advantages which my subsequent short sojourn upon the Don left me no time to enjoy whilst there; but what I have asserted I have heard from many Russian officers themselves; the source of this degeneracy being traced to a variety of causes, not the least of which, I should conceive, has been the attempt of the Imperial Government to drill and discipline them as regular dragoons, which has had the effect of considerably impairing their efficiency, without in the least answering the purpose intended, it being a service for which neither men nor horses are in the least degree qualified. In the organization and formation of

the Cossacks of the Line and those of the Black Sea this error has very wisely been avoided.

It was now the infantry assumed the offensive, and, formed in two lines, and covered by their tirailleurs, in addition to their guns and cavalry, advanced in turn. And it was here either the faulty nature of the system of drill, or the heavy and inert nature of the Russian soldier, became but too clearly manifest. Instead of taking advantage of the inequalities of the ground, or any other occasional cover that offered, the skirmishers either stood rigidly fixed, or moved according to order, their eyes turned immoveably upon their leader, with the same automaton-like motion they had previously exhibited in column, the line being dressed to a ridiculous pitch of exactness, and the same course of action followed up in the present instance, though of a nature so wholly and utterly dissimilar to that previously introduced.

This sufficiently explained to me what I had before found some difficulty in understanding,—successes of the Turkish cavalry[1] in the cam-

[1] In the war of 1828, two entire columns of the Russian army, under the Field-Marshal Diebitsch, consisting of between

paigns of the last war; and the conviction forced itself upon my mind, that, with some addition to our numbers, with the active and energetic gentry at my back, it would have been a task of no more than ordinary difficulty to have captured the guns, and, turning them upon the infantry,—had our work been of a *business-like* nature,—have had a more than even chance of carrying the day.

It was during this movement the scene became doubly animated; though it required constant vigilance on the part of the officers to prevent the horsemen on both sides from coming to actual blows, as, heated by the contest, several severe falls had occurred, and bruises innumerable exchanged between the belligerents; while

six and seven thousand men, were completely broken, and the greater part sabred, in the action at Derveesh-keuy, by the Turkish cavalry of the army of the late Mahomed Redschid Pasha. In that disastrous affair, had this gallant body of men received the slightest support from their infantry, (the miserable Nizam Djedditt, who one and all bolted, almost without firing a shot,) or, indeed, from any other part of the Vizier's force, (for they were left wholly and entirely to bear the brunt of the fight,) there is great probability the Russians would have had to contend with much more serious difficulties than they subsequently encountered before their eagles were planted on the walls of Adrianople.

an unfortunate incident had very nearly been productive of most serious mischief.

One of the Mussulman cavalry had discharged his piece at a Cossack, part of the contents of which—owing to its having been either loaded for some time, so that the powder had become as hard as a ball, or to the wadding being of a thick heavy nature—entered the man's side, who fell from his horse, the blood gushing forth in a thick stream over his comrade next him, who, supposing it proceeded from a shot and was intentionally fired, on the instant struck the Mahometan senseless from his saddle with the but of his long gun. Parties on either side now rushed to the spot,—the djerreeds flew like a hail-storm—while lance and firelock-buts rung with a sound that, in cooler moments, would have made one's ear ache to listen to.

Fortunately, the Cossack, though severely was not dangerously hurt; but it was not without considerable difficulty the storm was appeased, and the combatants separated—and then not before some sharp wounds and many sets of sore bones had been given and exchanged on both sides,—two-thirds of the whole, however, (if the truth must be told,) being mono-

polized by the Mussulman cavalry, who, in good sooth, notwithstanding their numerical superiority, were no match for their adversaries.

The *brouillerie* was at the highest, when an accident had well nigh occurred to myself, which would have included me in the list of casualties on the occasion. With others, at the moment of its commencement, I had spurred my horse between the combatants, when a tremendous shout of "Ya Allah!" caught my attention. On turning my head, I found it proceeded from a Mussulman about ten paces distant, who, standing in his saddle, with his arm drawn back, had his djerreed upraised, its evident aim and object being nothing more nor less than my own pericranium, which, however hard and well-seasoned, I felt morally convinced, must come by the worst in such a collision. Possibly he may not have intended throwing it: at all events, it looked very like it, and there was little time for reflection. His position being somewhat aslant towards the left, was considerably in my favour; accordingly, stooping over my saddle-bow, I dashed at him. My right leg encountered his —his horse staggered with the shock—and he was sprawling in an instant—while a general

hurra issued from my own followers at the result.

Both lines, now formed up into one massive solid square, prepared to resist cavalry. This manœuvre was executed with a heaviness and deliberation which would have rendered it very hazardous in the presence of an active enterprising enemy.[1] We charged down upon them; and though many of the horses plunged, reared, and would not advance in face of the tremendous and well-sustained fire which met them as they came on, by far the greater part bore gallantly up, particularly those in rear of myself,—some two or three of whom, however, the moment I reined up, unable to follow the example so immediately, from the headlong pace we were at, came full but upon my horse's crupper, who, little expecting to be charged in that quarter, threw up his heels with such force and vigour, that I began to entertain doubts as to whether he had not some intention of throwing a summerset,—an idea the very reverse of

1 The present sovereign of Russia has greatly improved the military system of his country. It is, however, in simplicity, as well as rapidity and combination, much behind that at present used both in the French and English armies.

agreeable, when it is considered I was within a few inches of the double row of bristling bayonets of the kneeling ranks, and an equally unpleasant garniture in those of the standing,—upon either of which had I been thrown, I must, to a certainty, have been flung, like a trussed partridge, unless fortune awarded me a special mark of her favour, by permitting me to alight between both, of which the chances were fifty to one against me.

Wheeling to the right, we rushed round the square with the rapidity of a whirlwind. This was the conclusion; and, having drawn up and saluted, the troops filed off to their respective quarters, while I rejoined my friends in the immediate circle of the Governor-General: and greatly to their astonishment, and a *little*, I rather suspect, to the disappointment of some, without any other *souvenir* than one or two trifling contusions.

The following day was devoted to an exhibition of a somewhat different nature. This was a description of passage-of-arms with the lance and djerreed, and a field of exercise for all arms, forming a rendezvous for the whole of the Cau-

casian nobility, Circassian, Georgian, Osmanli, or Persian.[1]

The lists, if I may so term them, formed a part of the high-road, half a mile distant from the town, and were enclosed in a space of about three hundred yards in length and thirty in breadth. The ground was kept by a party of Cossacks of the Don, with their long spears, within whom, again, at intervals, were a party of gens-d'armerie, acting, I suppose, as marshals of the field, from their being present there to preserve order, and take care that the heat of temper excited by the sport should not be carried too far.

As on the previous morning, every species of carriage was in requisition, and formed in lines round the enclosure; and in no clime or country could a superiority of female beauty to that at present assembled ever have been brought together. Indeed, what with their loveliness, the

[1] The term "Persian" is here used as signifying those provinces of the government of the Caucasus, beyond the Arras, which formed part of the territories of the Shah, till wrested from him in the last war by his powerful adversary. In the same way, the word "Osmanli" applies to those ceded by the Turkish Sultan.

brilliancy and magnificence of the various costumes of the tilters, the striking and singular nature of the entire scene—in which it appeared the extremes of Europe and Asia had, as it were, met together—all formed a picture, a similarity to which I had never previously, and have never since, witnessed.

In the area, all the horses were of the first Eastern blood, and well did their admirable training tend to display the matchless address and superior horsemanship of the riders; conspicuous among whom at the djerreed, and who certainly bore away the palm from all competitors, was a young Karabaugh nobleman. He was clad in a superb Persian costume, consisting of a surcoat of the richest purple velvet, magnificently embroidered with gold, and vest composed of shawl formed of the very finest cachemere; while his horse, of the choicest breed of his province,[1] was caparisoned in a style befitting the rank of his rider. He was an uncommonly fine young man, but excited some ill-will among the spectators, as he proudly caracolled through the lists, from the want of

[1] The province of Karabaugh is celebrated throughout the whole of Central Asia for its fine breed of horses.

moderation he displayed in the use of his weapon, which his unrivalled skill and dexterity easily permitted his doing, without in the least risking the chance of his being worsted by any of his opponents, who on several occasions were made to feel the force of his arm, with a severity the rules of courtesy scarcely warranted, more than one being flung from their saddles with extreme violence; as it was, therefore, a loud hurra greeted a mischance which happened to himself, when the djerreed gave place to the lance exercise, in which, however expert, he found himself overmatched by a wild-looking Koordish chieftain, from the frontiers of Erivan, to whom he became opposed, and who, after several turns, as they again met in full career, dexterously parried his lance, so as to throw it over his own shoulder, and then, as he passed him, (my own bones ache at the reminiscence, for, on more than one occasion, the same has happened to myself,) darted his weapon at his back with such force, that, after a vain and desperate effort to keep his seat, he fell heavily over his horse's left shoulder. The shout which arose seemed to half madden him, as he sprang upon his horse, and dashed towards his antagonist; the gens-

d'armes however forced themselves between and separated them.

A brilliant ball at the hospitable mansion of the Prince de C——, who is regarded as the head of the Georgian nobility, closed the festivities of the day.[1]

A few days afterwards, I was invited by the General-in-Chief to view the barracks, hospital,

[1] This festival, I find, is an annual one, and those who wish to revive the ancient scenes of chivalry in England would find it advantageous to visit the Georgian capital for the purpose of acquiring a few lessons in the very hazardous but noble art of the tilt and tourney. Since I quitted the Caucasus, I have ascertained that what so much interested me at the time was a very poor display in comparison with that of former and later periods, the recent extensive changes in the government during my stay there having rendered it doubtful if any would take place that year (1838) at all. The one following, however, from what I read in a French journal in Paris, September, 1839, by way of making amends for the deficiency of that preceding, the fête was magnificent beyond example, and included among other combats a brilliant melée between twelve Tartar Khans and nobles, in gilt plate armour, with black horses, on the one side, and an equal number of Circassian chiefs and princes, in bright polished chain-mail, with white chargers, on the other. After a hard struggle, victory declared for the latter, six of their number keeping their saddles to the last, while the whole of the Tartars were to a man unhorsed and overthrown, several among them, as well as two or three of the Circassians, being very severely wounded in the contest.

and drill of two of the regiments then quartered in the town, an aid-de-camp of the chef-d'état major, General Kotzebue, being sent by that distinguished officer to accompany and impart every information to me in my round.

My first visit was to the barracks, in which both corps were quartered—a large, spacious building, and capable of affording accommodation for a much more considerable body of men than at present occupied it; the interior exhibited the arms and accoutrements arranged, and preserved in a manner unsurpassed by any troops in the world; and though in point of cleanliness the rooms were not altogether what could have been wished, every attention seemed to have been bestowed towards the care and comfort of the men.

From thence I passed upon the parade, where several squads of recruits were at drill, and a company drawn out for my immediate inspection. In observing the former, I could not but remark upon a most singular contradiction in the Russian system, which was that, while the slow time (except for the purpose of instruction), and many other etceteras, having reference solely to parade, had been recently abolished, a variety

of perplexing, harassing, and unnecessary detail had been introduced into the manual and platoon exercises, as well as the system of manœuvre, the purpose of which I must confess I was wholly at a loss to comprehend, unless it was to harass and worry the soldier both in mind and body; at least, so it appeared in my estimation, from being led to believe that simplicity, rapidity, and combination form the most essential requisites for securing a successful result to military movements. Another thing which struck my attention most forcibly was, that, while the soldiers before me, in point of clothing and appearance, were all that the military eye would wish to rest upon, many others, who were either looking on, or strolling about the barrack-yard, presented a picture the very reverse of all this in their undress, which, consisting of the usual slouching great-coat, covered in too many instances what might with justice be termed little better than an assortment of rags (by no means over-clean); and, I may have been, though I think not, mistaken, in some instances, even the inexpressibles usually worn by my own compatriots in our native glens, and national regiments! This afforded a sad contrast

when I reflected upon the appearance of our own men in India and the Mediterranean, who, with their red, burly faces, and clothing replendent with excessive cleanliness, are never seen to such advantage as in their undress.

From the parade I passed into the cook-room, where they were engaged in preparing the men's dinner, which consisted of a thick soup composed of vegetables and lard (meat being only issued three times a week), and black ration bread. An Englishman may smile at such meagre fare, but I can assure the reader he would have been as agreeably surprised on tasting it as I was myself; the latter especially is said to be most particularly wholesome and nutritious. One part of the diet, however, I must not forget to mention, of which the Russian soldier, indeed I may say all ranks in the country, from the highest to the lowest, is immoderately fond, and which consists of a beverage rejoicing in the name of *quas*, or, as it is more politely termed, "lemonade Russe." I was seduced to taste it, but never felt inclined to renew the experiment; it is said to be highly conducive to health — on the medical principle, I suppose, of the more nausea the more good is

created; since to me it appeared the concoction of all the united villany of an apothecary's shop.

From the barracks I proceeded to the general hospital, of which it would be impossible to speak in too high terms, since a greater degree of cleanliness, order, or comfort, could not be found under any military department in the world. It consisted of a very large, handsome building, situated in the most airy as well as the most salubrious part of the environs of the city, and was divided into a variety of wards, admirably constructed so as to guard the patients from the intense heat of summer, as well as the severity of the winter cold: the *tout ensemble*, indeed, afforded a most gratifying picture of the vigilant care and attention it displayed towards the comfort of the sick and wounded.

I have since been led to believe that much of this is owing to the active benevolence and superintendence of the commandant, Colonel B——, since of many other Russian hospitals I subsequently visited, not only were by far the greater number immeasurably inferior in all their arrangements to that of Teflis, but, in more than one instance, completely the reverse.

The Colonel was a gallant veteran, who had been in every grand action, from the Borodino up to the taking of Paris, where he had the distinction, as he himself expressed it, of serving under the "Great Duke;" for by such a term is that illustrious personage distinguished throughout the Russian army.

In concluding these observations, it will not perhaps appear misplaced to take a cursory glance at the military code, towards the amelioration of which, and its gradual improvement, without detriment to the discipline of the service, the active mind of the Emperor has been turned with all its wonted energy. Indeed, before his accession to the throne, the system, even under the humane and enlightened Alexander, was almost to the full as rigorous and cruel as in the time of his predecessor, and which, wholly without judgment, seemed to have but one common bond of union among all ranks — that of terror; and fully confirming what I have heard from more than one officer of rank and distinction in the French army during the Empire, on whose judgment and moderation the fullest reliance might be placed, viz., that the composition of the Russian army in point of

matériel is perhaps the finest in the world; but, drilled under an intolerant and cruel discipline, which reduces the men to mere machines, like most machines, should its spring or connecting link be broken in the fall of their leader, and one or two other of the superior officers next in rank, the corps itself is sacrificed, from there being none of the juniors capable of assuming the command.

The same system may also be said to render them so extremely nervous regarding flank movements, or a sudden onset from an unexpected quarter, which was, on more than one occasion, the case during the last Turkish war, and productive of the most ruinous consequences. Till then the outpost duties had invariably been entrusted to the Cossacks; but, in the first of those campaigns, it was assigned to the regular troops, till the surprises and disasters which ensued very quickly caused the old system to be restored; and in those which followed no repetition of the experiment ever occurred.

Twelve years since, not only were the subordinate commissioned officers of a regiment, the captains and subalterns, liable to corporal punishment from the hands of their superiors,

but it was by no means an uncommon occurrence for them to be actually in attendance upon the tables of their commanders like other menials.[1]

This system, however, the Emperor very soon checked; and a decision of his, on a most lamentable catastrophe, caused a sensation throughout the whole empire not easily to be forgotten. As the unfortunate event to which I allude formed a theme for general conversation when I was in Russia, and exhibits a bright picture of the justice of its ruler, while it at the same time offers the strongest corroborative proof of what

[1] It was suggested to me, on the publication of this chapter, by the Chevalier de B——, Imperial Consul-General in London, that, relative to this last observation, I must be mistaken, the system in question having been discontinued long previous to the period I have mentioned. The strictest subsequent inquiries, however, confirm the correctness of the assertion, and, though reprobated, and never permitted by the commanding officers of the Guards and other regiments d'élite in the Russian service, it was only on the accession of the Emperor Nicholas, this degrading subjection to superior authority was peremptorily and finally abolished. I may mention, as one instance among many, that I could adduce of corroborative testimony, that Slade, in his Travels, observes his having personally witnessed it so late even as in the Turkish war of 1828-29.

I have mentioned regarding him, I may here relate it.

An officer of hussars was proceeding with important despatches for the government towards St. Petersburg; he had changed horses at one of the post-houses, and was about to resume his route, when the carriage of a general officer drove up to the door, the inmate of which, on finding no other horses were to be procured, immediately directed the removal of those attached to the hussar's carriage. The officer respectfully remonstrated on this proceeding, first on the ground of his previous arrival at the post-house, and next upon the nature of his business, which was most urgent: the only reply to his representations was the General springing from his chariot, and striking him a violent blow with his clinched fist full in the face. The blood of the young man rushed, with a glow of crimson, to his countenance at this wanton and unprovoked insult; he was from the southward—the frontier was barely passed, and he was still armed; in the frenzy of the moment, his quivering fingers grasped the pistol in his belt—a flash, followed by a sudden yell, told the result,

and, shot through the heart, his brutal superior fell dead at his feet! The homicide was seized and brought to trial, was found guilty, and sentenced to the mines of Siberia.

On the proceedings being submitted to the Emperor, he directed the reassembly of the court-martial, on the ground of the most material point of the evidence not having been entered upon the proceedings, or even indeed gone into, and which consisted in the fact, as to whether the pistol was at hand the moment it was fired, and, above all, if it was loaded at the time. This omission being rectified, and the former verdict adhered to, the finding and sentence of the court was shortly afterwards published to the army, with the strong, magic, and emphatic words of *disapproved* and *annulled* attached to the same!

A few brief but forcible remarks from the Emperor recorded his reasons for the view he had taken of the subject, and which stated that both parties, moving in the same rank of life as gentlemen,[1] the indignity and humiliation of a

[1] Vourinien is, I believe, the word. It means, literally, nobleman, but corresponds to the term gentleman in our acceptation of it.

blow, under the circumstances detailed, justified the unfortunate result; since, from the infirmity of human nature, as might be expected, it would rouse every passion beyond the bounds of all control or prudence.

This decision, which created considerable surprise, was productive of unmitigated satisfaction among all ranks, except the brutal and low-minded (of whom, unfortunately, there are but too many), as the beneficial effects derived from it became more apparent, and more appreciated.

Notwithstanding this, however, there is much room for improvement, and that of a nature which, instead of deteriorating from, would materially add to, the efficiency of discipline. The custom of reducing officers of all grades to the ranks, from the General downwards, is radically bad, not merely from its subversion of that line of demarcation which should ever exist between officers and men, but from the inequality, and, in some cases, the actual inutility, of the punishment, as the following instances will testify.

An officer of dragoons of the regiment of

Nidjnénovogorod[1], on receiving a reprimand from his commanding officer on the parade, in front of the whole corps, very summarily knocked him down. For this (which in any other army in the world he would most deservedly have been shot) he was tried by a court-martial, and reduced to the ranks. He was a brave and enterprising, as well as wayward and wilful, young man, and the corps being a few weeks afterwards ordered against the Lesguees[2], within a twelvemonth he was restored to his original rank.

[1] This is the only regiment of regular cavalry in the army of the Caucasus; they are generally stationed at Karagatch; and, at the period when I was in Georgia, were commanded by the high-minded and gallant (*in every sense of the word*) Colonel B—b—off. In this corps are numbers of the Polish youth (some of them of the first families in the country), serving as private soldiers, from having taken an active belligerent part in the late ill-fated rising, and it is not the least amiable trait in the character of this excellent officer, that, while rigid in his loyalty and the discharge of his duty towards his sovereign, every consideration and kindness is displayed by him towards these unfortunate young men. On the inspection of his regiment by the Emperor during his stay at Teflis, he received the highest mark of his imperial master's approbation at its appearance, efficiency, and discipline, when, taking his own cross from his breast, he placed it on that of its commander, before the whole parade.

[2] The fierce and hardy tribes of the Eastern Caucasus.

This incident forms a sad contrast to the other. During the season when the company were assembled at Piatigorsk for the benefit of the waters, among the visitants was an elderly gentleman well advanced in life, of considerable rank and fortune, who had recently been married to a young lady, of very great personal attractions, some thirty years his junior in point of age; more, it was asserted by rumour, from force employed by her parents, than any violent penchant on her part for himself; however that may have been, it soon became palpably evident that they were anything but on the best of terms, and it was whispered the lady seemed by no means displeased with the attentions of a young and extremely handsome officer of Chasseurs. What at the utmost wholly rested upon hearsay, was repeated, and that too in no very delicate terms, as fact, at the table d'hôte, by a coarse-minded and brutal savage, a Captain in an infantry regiment, unaware the husband was present; who, quitting the table, proceeded homewards, and without further parlance struck his unoffending and innocent wife (for innocent she was) to the ground, where, bleeding and

senseless, she was found by the unfortunate but unconscious author of all this violence, who, aghast at the spectacle, learnt, not from her, but others who were present, what had caused it.

He sought for and quickly found the traducer, whom, after the preliminary of a sound horse-whipping in the midst of a large circle of spectators, not one of whom offered to interfere, he challenged. As great a coward as a ruffian, his antagonist carried the cartel to his assailant's commanding-officer, who, while loathing his informant, by the stern rigour of military law had no alternative; the officer was placed in arrest, tried and reduced, in which situation, though years have elapsed, he in all probability still remains.

A second ground of animadversion is, the license of all ranks, from the Ensign upwards, to inflict corporal punishment almost to an unlimited extent upon the soldier, with or without the slightest reason; a prerogative unfortunately but too often used for the gratification of sudden caprice, private revenge, or momentary passion. I have previously observed the governing principle of the Russian military

code is fear; it therefore follows (with, I am happy to say, many bright exceptions), little attention is bestowed by the officer towards cultivating the attachment and regard of the private, though, perhaps, there is no being in the world more capable of appreciating kindness from his superiors than the Russian soldier; and of this utter want of sympathy, I may say, ordinary feeling, I was myself a witness.

In company with my friend V——, of the Imperial Guard, I was leaving the bath-room at Piatigorsk, and on entering the neat and beautiful garden, which forms the entrance to the establishment, I observed some twelve or fourteen sick and wounded soldiers seated on the various forms around, all of whom rose at my approach. I desired them, through him, to reseat themselves, and, remaining on the same spot engaged with him in earnest conversation, I did not observe till about ten minutes afterwards that they were still standing, some of them evidently in extreme pain. I again repeated in a higher tone what I had previously desired; the poor creatures glanced from us to a Russian officer who stood behind, and whom we had not pre-

viously observed, on whose broad, mean-looking, and vulgar countenance, the acutest physiognomist could have traced nought beyond the most listless apathy. V—— looked at him for an instant, and then, turning to the invalids, said in a loud and authoritative tone of voice, "The English Colonel *orders* you to sit down." The poor creatures looked most gratefully towards us as they obeyed, while the automaton, touching his cap to me, passed on.

"I fear you will have but a bad opinion of us," observed V—— to me; "but remember that, though there are unfortunately too many in our service like that soulless brute, we are not all so."

The last point on which I shall observe, is the abhorrent extent of cruelty to which the system of corporal punishment is carried, the more especially as exemplified in what is usually termed "running the gauntlet," and which, wholly different from that practised in bygone years in the British and Prussian armies, is inflicted in the following manner:—

A number of men, varying from a single squadron to a whole regiment, according to the

number of lashes to be inflicted, are formed in single ranks facing inwards, each soldier being armed with a strong oaken rod about four feet long, and the thickness of the middle finger. The unhappy prisoner, stripped to the waist and handcuffed, is then marched through, two soldiers holding the points of their sabres or bayonets at his breast, to prevent his advancing beyond a certain pace, and receiving from each man as he passes a blow given with his whole force. This continues till wearied nature can hold no longer, and he sinks down unable to move; his senseless form is then placed upon a hurdle or wheelbarrow, and in this manner he is dragged on, and receives the rest of his punishment.

It may reasonably be supposed that not a few expire under its infliction on the spot, while many more live but to writhe in the most harrowing and excruciating tortures in the regimental hospitals, till death happily terminates their sufferings. But the worst is yet to be mentioned: in the event of the former occurring, the given number *must* yet be inflicted; and, horrible to relate, the hideous, livid mass of senseless, shapeless human clay, is still drawn

through the ranks, the corpse resounding with the blows rained upon it till the sentence is complete.[1]

Under these accumulated horrors, woe to the wretch whose compassionate feelings or weakness of nerves render him incapable of striking with the prescribed force, as he is almost im-

[1] I may here, perhaps, be pardoned for introducing a comparative note regarding our own system of military discipline; premising, however, that it is not addressed to those mob orators and factious disputants, who, with the cant of patriotism on their lips, but utter want of principle in their hearts, would unhesitatingly sacrifice both the honour and discipline of the army, as well as the interests of their country, to their own selfish views, but to those *really* philanthropic persons, whose well-meaning but meddling interference in military affairs, of which their knowledge must be superficial in the extreme, may one day be productive of the most serious mischief, and, more than anything else, ultimately tend to dash the army from that high station and pre-eminence which, under its illustrious commander, it has so gloriously attained. In submitting the following extracts from two different courts-martial, I may mention that the latter came under my own immediate observation when at Brest, towards the close of the year 1832, while the other was copied from the newspapers containing the general order issued to the troops in India.

Extract from the proceedings of a general court-martial assembled at Kamptee, East Indies, 21st November, 1834:—

"Private W. N., First Company Madras European Regiment, arraigned on the undermentioned charge. For being intoxicated

mediately seized up, and a similar punishment inflicted upon himself!

One of these fearful scenes occurred at Erivan shortly after I had passed through it *en route* to Teflis. A regiment stationed there, rendered desperate by continued tyranny and ill-treatment, burst out into open mutiny, in the course of

when on guard, on the evening of the 3rd August, and striking Serjeant Y. K., his superior officer, with the but of his musket when directed by him to be confined in the quarter-guard. Verdict, Guilty. Sentence, to receive three hundred lashes, of which one hundred and fifty were inflicted."

Extract from the proceedings of a council of war, held at Brest, October, 1832:—

"The soldier, J. J. L., brought before the tribunal, charged with using abusive language, and finally striking to the earth with his musket his superior officer, the Serjeant-major, C. H., who found fault with the state of his arms and accoutrements on the inspection for parade on the morning of the 12th ultimo. Verdict, Guilty. Sentence, to be shot to death by musketry. Confirmed; but, in consideration of fourteen years' previous service, commuted to ten years of the boulet!!"

Hear this, ye who would assimilate the discipline of the English to that of the French army, *where they have no flogging*; hear this, and at least consult one party who has an interest in the subject, the soldier himself; let the question be asked of the veteran, whether officer or private, and what will be his reply? "That the total abolition of corporal punishment *must* be followed up by a far greater and much more extensive authority to shoot."

which their commander fell, pierced to the heart by a musket-ball.

It was quickly repressed, and the ringleaders seized, of whom, however, only four were brought o trial; they were found guilty, and sentenced to death. Of these, the man who had fired the fatal shot alone suffered the extreme penalty, that awarded to the others being *commuted* to two thousand lashes!! The result need scarce be told; they expired under its infliction in the greatest agonies, the actual murderer thus escaping the easiest — what commutation was this?

I must, however, observe that, speaking on the subject afterwards with a Russian officer, he mentioned that the sentence of death was a subject regarded with so much horror by the soldiery, that, as occurred on the present occasion, the actually severer and much more frightful punishment of the two was regarded with comparative indifference, most probably from their being so habituated to its frequent occurrence; he added, in conclusion, that, let the alternative be offered of the extreme penalty of military law, or even fifty thousand lashes, and there was not throughout the entire Russian army a single soldier who

would not unhesitatingly prefer the latter, with the hope that, however *others* may have sunk under a tenth part the number, *he* yet might have the good fortune to pass through the ordeal with safety.

CHAPTER III.

From Teflis to the Baths of the Caucasus, by the Pass of the Vladicaucase.

Having despatched my horses, together with my servants (with the exception of one, whom I retained to accompany me), under the especial direction of two Cossacks of the Line, furnished me by the Hetman for that purpose, to the military outpost situated at the foot of the pass which crosses the range of the mighty Caucasus; two days afterwards I followed them myself, as, having purchased an admirably-arranged travelling britzska, for my further route from the Circassian frontier through Russia, I was resolved upon performing the distance between that station and Teflis, by post.

I was accompanied by an officer, a captain in the regiment of the dragoons of Nidjninovogorod

(the corps I have previously mentioned as being the only one of regular cavalry stationed in the Caucasian provinces), who, proceeding the same route as myself, it was suggested by General Kotzebue, would prove of material service by accompanying me in my journey; a proposition to which I was but too happy to accede.

This gentleman was a Candiote by birth, and, though possessed of but little of the vivacity which distinguishes his nation, his exterior being rather marked by the quiet demeanour of the Osmanli, yet certainly possessed all its shrewdness, and a certain dry humour, which, with a large fund of general information (for he had travelled a great deal), rendered him a very pleasant and entertaining companion.

About five and twenty versts from Teflis, we passed a large village on the right of the road, said to form the site of the ancient Iberian capital, but of which no traces are visible at the present day, beyond a few mounds of earth and several large blocks of granite, scattered at intervals to a considerable extent; one object, worthy of observation, however, is a church of an old and rudely constructed make, and which tradition asserts to be one of the first erected in

the country during the earliest epoch of Christianity.

It was, as near as I could judge, about midnight; I had fallen fast asleep, when I was suddenly aroused by a crash, that at the moment I could have imagined heralded the end of the world's existence. I have heard the echo of upwards of a hundred pieces of ordnance in the field; I have felt my horse reel beneath the deafening explosion of a mine; but a parallel to such a peal as that which burst upon my now startled ear, and seemed to pierce the brain's most inward fibre, it has never been my lot to witness. Though momentarily stunned, I was in an instant completely awake; and then, such a keen, dazzling, lambent sheet of flame burst around, it seemed as if the circuit of the whole country was one bright stream of fire, followed, too, by a roar, if possible, more awful than the first.

Half blinded though I was, I yet had time to mark its effect: the horses stood firm and still, with mane erect, their eyes almost starting from their sockets, more like the frightful resemblance of an equal number of bronze statues, than a picture of living life. My companion, whose

pale countenance must have reflected back the image of my own, crossed himself devoutly, while our domestics pressed their hands to their eyes, to shut out the terrific spectacle, and the low, deep, yet fervent prayers of both, alike the Christian and the Mussulman, were poured forth with a devotion that could not have been more deeply expressed had the last hour been at hand.

Another flash — another — and another: the rain descended in torrents, as if threatening a second deluge, while the deep, hoarse murmur of the rushing wind, and the sounds of crashing and falling trees, imparted additional terror to the scene.

What a sublime— what an awful picture! I have been in many scenes of peril, both by sea and land; not merely the area of a bloody and well-sustained conflict, where its maddening excitement banishes aught else from memory but the resolution to do or die; but in others, where, placed in the fullest and clearest point of view, and destitute of any absorbent passion to string and nerve the mind, it became necessary calmly and resolutely to gaze upon the threatened danger no human means could avert; the more

especially on one occasion, in the early part of 1832, when, embarked in what was as gallant a bark as ever rode or stemmed the seas, in one of the severest of the equinoctial gales witnessed during that tempestuous period,[1] we rolled for some time, a heavy, crippled, misshapen wreck: fearfully, however, as it then impressed me, it was as nothing when compared to the feelings of breathless awe which possessed me on this occasion.

For upwards of an hour the storm raged, and then as suddenly ceased, giving place to the most intense stillness. A pale, glimmering light, at first but very faint, but which gradually increased in strength, now appeared amidst the dense and murky darkness; further yet it extended its gladdening influence; a part of the blue vault of heaven, studded with bright and innumerable stars, now disclosed itself, smiling, and serene, as if in contrast to the terrific scene which had but so recently passed away: further, and yet further still, it increased the extension of its cheering rays, the last black speck disap-

[1] A reference to Lloyd's List of March, 1832, will best explain the number of frightful and disastrous shipwrecks which occurred during the equinoctial gales of that time.

peared on the distant horizon, and there shone forth, in all its brilliancy and lustre, the serene, soft beauty of night in a southern clime.

It was then we breathed freely, and, congratulating each other upon the fortunate result of what we had witnessed, once more resumed our journey.

As daylight dawned, on every side we beheld traces of the havoc caused by the recent storm: massive trees torn up by the roots; others, of a lighter frame, snapped short asunder; whilst more than once the servants were obliged to alight and clear away the branches and fragments of rock and stone with which the road was frequently completely blocked up.

The sun had risen as we approached the stupendous chain of the Caucasus, and shed its glowing and glittering rays upon the vast and magnificent view before us. We reached the foot of the ascent about nine o'clock, and were most kindly received by Major A——, the commanding-officer of the outpost, which consisted of the head-quarters of a battalion of infantry.

At noon, the carriage having been already sent on in advance, we mounted our horses, and rode upwards. The road was broad, and admi-

rably constructed; but, like those of General Wade in my own country, in many places, both up and down, so abominably straight and steep, that it was sometimes nothing but tug, tug, for half an hour together, thereby affording some gratuitous lessons in the art of riding on the mane and tail, which would considerably have benefitted any aspiring novice qualifying himself for the honour of serving in the troop of the celebrated Mr. Ducrow, the equestrian. Nor was this all—the sun was warm, and indeed where the space was completely open, and it shone upon points of bluff rock, disagreeably hot; while the small valleys into which we occasionally descended were enlivened by gusts of wind, which, coming from the snow-covered hills above, rendered our harsh English eastern breezes nought but gentle zephyrs in comparison, producing the combined effect of thus exhibiting for our benefit the agreeable sensation of first being roasted on St. Lawrence's gridiron, and then soused in an ice-pail.

After a six hours' ride, occupied in performing a less number of miles, we reached the military post of Basananoor, occupied by a detachment of Cossacks. Then, indeed, all was for-

gotten, except the gorgeous, magnificent, and sublime spectacle which met our view on every side. It was indeed a sight well calculated at once to impress the beholder with awe, wonder, and admiration: fields of the richest fertility, groves, and forests of trees rising in their height and majesty, through which, at intervals, might be seen the gushing mountain stream, as they dashed from crag to crag; while on every commanding point, stood dark, stern, solitary looking buildings, of solid and massive masonry, which had braved the storms of centuries, and were the watch-towers of former days, similar to those on our own borders, to give the alarm, and check the inroads of the fierce and hardy tribes of the Caucasus; the whole, crowned with the snow-clad summits above, forming a picture the pencil of a Salvator Rosa alone could have portrayed, or realised in the full extent of its majestic splendour.

We remained here for the night, and the following morning resumed our route upwards, no less than twelve horses being harnessed to the carriage to draw it along. It certainly was tough work, and, as we got into the region of snows, occasional strong puffs of wind blew such a

shower of flakes in our faces, that we were alike half choked and blinded.

Another incident was still more disagreeable. The whole party were pretty well together, when a shout from one of my Persian servants and a Cossack, who were in advance, attracted universal attention, to be followed as immediately by a general shout of laughter from the others, on witnessing the cause, and which originated in the ground beneath them having given way; they had plumped into what they imagined at the moment to have been a large hole, the one up to his saddle-girths, and the other still deeper, his horse's head and neck alone being visible.

Our mirth, however, was as ill-timed as it eventually turned out to be premature; for scarcely was the first burst of our cachinnatory chorus concluded, before plunge, plunge, plunge, we one and all followed the example, a general execration and cry of dismay announcing the result.

I threw myself out of my saddle, and with considerable caution, and with no little difficulty, succeeded in leading my horse lower down, on a track upon which I saw the carriage approaching, a similar movement being accomplished successively by the rest of the party.

On the arrival of the britzska we learned the cause of our disaster, which consisted in what we had mistaken for the road being nothing more than the snow of an avalanche, which, having fallen, had spread itself to a considerable extent, and during the latter part of the winter become completely hardened by the repeated passage of caravans passing over it, but which the spring sunshine was now beginning to melt away.

It was in the very spirit of ill-humour that we remounted, and continued our journey, shivering with cold, the unpleasant phenomenon above-mentioned having drenched us to such a degree, that any one might have been led to suppose we had undergone the discipline of the horse-pond.

In another hour we reached the summit of the pass, and then commenced our downward course, having traversed a verst of which, we passed the boundaries of the snow, and once more reaching the green verdure and foliage, which seemed even brighter still from the contrast it afforded to the scene through which we had so recently passed, by the time

we reached the post-house, and had done justice to an ample morning repast, all remembrance of our recent disagreeable adventure was entirely forgotten, save as a theme for unrestrained merriment.

Our next stage brought us to the celebrated Kosbec, which, next to Elborooz, is the highest mountain of the range of the Caucasus, and, though not of the vast extent and magnitude of the latter, in regard to height very nearly approaches it. From the point where we stopped to change horses, no better spot could have been selected to witness its sublimity and grandeur, situated as it is in a valley almost at its base, and on the present occasion could not have been seen to higher advantage, as presenting in one tableau the singular spectacle of the height of summer and depth of winter, as here blending in unison; the sky bright and glowing, without one single solitary speck to cloud its spotless purity, and exhibiting the serene beauty of a summer's day in the Bay of Naples, shaded each side of the stupendous mass, the rays of the sun shining on its eternal snows, the which,

reaching, as it were, to a given point, afforded a contrast unique as well as beautiful to the luxuriant foliage at its extremity, the whole prospect being considerably enhanced by a lesser hill to the left, on which stood an ancient and highly picturesque ruin.

From thence our route lay along the side of a broad, rapid, mountain river, broken at various intervals into falls of great force and strength, the roar of which echoed like distant thunder in its reverberation through the hills.

Early in the evening we reached Vladicaucase, which forms the first of those colonies of Cossacks established by the Empress Catherine as a line of military posts, at once to repel the incursions of the Circassians, and keep open the communication with her Georgian provinces. Notwithstanding, however, so long a period has elapsed, the road between this and Catherinagrade is never traversed without a very strong escort, varying in number according to the hazard of being attacked by the mountaineers, the rank and consideration of the person or persons for whom the guard may be required, and the

value of the convoy or caravan passing by this route.

In times of very imminent danger, and under all circumstances for ladies, the usual custom is to wait for the post, which proceeds every Friday, escorted by a strong detachment, generally consisting of a battalion of infantry, a body of cavalry, and four guns—a force which, as the ground to be traversed is a plain, nearly throughout entirely open, and affording but few or no facilities for their mode of warfare, the Circassians of late years have rarely ventured to attack.

This method, however, is slow and tedious, occupying five days in performing a journey of little less than a hundred English miles, and is extremely disagreeable to the impatient feelings of a traveller anxious to hurry onward; having, therefore, an order from the commander-in-chief for a strong party of cavalry to accompany me in the event of my resolving to proceed by myself, I had previously determined upon moving forward at once.

On our arrival at the station, however, we were apprised of some intelligence, which, from its threatening nature, seemed likely to derange this resolve. Rumours were rife of the repulse, with heavy loss, of a Russian armament on the coast, which had rendered the road more than usually hazardous, while the officer commanding the post declared that he had not more than ten Cossacks at that moment for duty, the rest having been, within the last three days, withdrawn to the westward.

My companion, who from the first had by no means relished our proposed onward movement, now seemed to make up his mind there was no other alternative left but to wait for the ensuing post, a delay I was as inflexibly determined no consideration should induce me to submit to, as, not to mention what I have previously observed relative to the dilatoriness of the march, it wanted four days (this being the Monday) for its commencement, and having so recently escaped from one species of imprisonment, (*id est*, quarantine), I had no inclination whatever for

a second edition, however limited the period, to be passed, too, within the confines of a Russian fortification, carefully constructed so as to crowd a mass of soldiers, Cossacks, horses, and other cattle, into the smallest space possible.

I therefore signified to the commandant my determination to proceed, without any reference to the strength of the escort with which he could furnish me—an intimation which at first caused my fellow-traveller to stare, and then shake his head incredulously, regarding it merely as the momentary effervescence of one of those temporary fits of insanity to which all Englishmen are generally supposed throughout the East to be periodically subject.

When, however, he found that I was in earnest, "a change came o'er the spirit of his dream," and he remonstrated, in the strongest and most energetic terms, against a measure which, in his opinion, entailed the absolute certainty of being either shot, speared, or carried into the mountains; but, though as

averse as himself to any of these very agreeable alternations, I still firmly adhered to my original intention of proceeding.

With a half-suppressed exclamation of bitterness of spirit on his evil destiny, which had thus consigned to his charge an English madman, the captain now turned to the commandant, and warned him of the account he would have to render to the commander-in-chief, and of what he would have to encounter from the displeasure of General Golovine, in the event of any accident happening to a stranger, *his* guest, and, what was more, an officer of rank. [N.B. Had it been a civilian, however talented or distinguished, perhaps neither the one nor the other would have cared much what became of *him*.]

The officer, in his turn, protested that, were it for the service of the Emperor himself, he could not furnish what he did not possess, and which certainly would have been an event somewhat difficult even for obedience to Russian discipline to enable a person to

accomplish; he added, however, that the carriage, followed by a kibitka,[1] was capable of containing, well packed together, very nearly half a company of foot-soldiers, whom he would direct his adjutant to detail for our service on the instant.

My fellow-traveller caught at the proposition, and, with considerable satisfaction, and a countenance expressive of very little doubt as to its favourable reception, he mentioned the overture to me.

[1] The vilest conveyance the world ever witnessed. It is a light, small, uncovered cart, absolutely nailed to the shafts. I once ventured into one, although only for a distance of eight or ten miles, on a road, too, as smooth and level as a bowling-green, but the experiment was perfectly sufficient, and, rather than undergo a repetition of it, I would immeasurably prefer the hardest Tartar journey ever ridden. I should think it of admirable utility in regard to dyspectic patients, although somewhat on the principle of the cure for the gout, effected in the person of a British medical officer, a martyr to that aristocratic yet painful disorder, who, taken prisoner by the enemy during the Burmese War, was wholly and effectually freed from his troublesome visitor, by being rigidly confined to the wholesome and nutritious, but somewhat flat and tasteless, diet of boiled rice and pure water, punctually enlivened by the exercise of being compelled to march some fifteen or twenty miles a day, at the point of the bayonet.

It was now my turn to stare. The aspect of my confederates not merely exhibited the total absence of anything like jesting in their proposal, but intimated the self-satisfied bearing of persons who had found means of releasing themselves from a situation of more than ordinary difficulty, and this being but too palpably evident, and forming, as it were, a guarantee for their sanity, which I certainly was momentarily rather disposed to doubt, I glanced upon my light and elegant britzska, and thought what would the maker have said on parting with so fine a model of his art and workmanship, had he been aware that, at no distant period, it would be converted into a land transport (if I may so term it) for a company of Russian grenadiers.

I was about at once to give a somewhat peremptory negative to the proposal, when my Persian servant—who, for some time past, I had observed in deep and earnest conversation with one of the Tartar grooms—beckoned me towards him, and, as all around were aware of what was the subject in dis-

pute between us, requested my serious attention to what the latter had to propose.

"We are," said this most respectable personage, who, from one or two little trifling incidents previously noticed regarding him, I had strong reason to suspect had himself been an experienced freebooter in his time, "we are seven in number, strong, and well-armed men: should we be attacked by a small party, our horses being of the best blood and spirit, with our better fire-arms, will give us a more than even chance of success; while, if assailed by a larger number, we can then seek safety in flight, with little probability of their catching us; whereas, if we take these rascally Cossacks," (the speaker was a rigid and orthodox Mussulman, who never would have missed his evening prayers, even had he been plundering the caravan of pilgrims proceeding to the shrine of the Prophet at Mecca)—"fellows," continued my exemplary follower, "whose stunted hacks will neither enable them to fight nor fly with any advantage—we shall, to a certainty, be attacked; and then

our honour is concerned, and we must stand by them, whatever is the result. Under these circumstances, I most strenuously recommend to the strong in battle and wise in council," (myself!) "that, if we do proceed, it had better be as we are, without any escort at all."

Though somewhat startled at first, a moment's reflection convinced me, in spite of its apparent hazard, of the real prudence of the proposed measure, to which I immediately came to the conclusion of adopting, and at once mentioned my determination.

For some moments my companion appeared aghast, seeming actually stunned at a declaration which he could only consider as emblematic of a higher paroxysm than usual of English aberration of mind. It was only on witnessing girths tightened, pistols and carabines carefully examined, sabres cast loose in their scabbards, and other paraphernalia of preparation for a period in which they might be brought into full and vigorous play, that he recovered sufficiently to offer the strongest and most energetic remonstrances to a course of proceeding which, in his estimation, en-

tailed the almost certain issue of a speedy consignment to the other world, or an elevation into the snowy regions before us, to undergo—the Lord knows what! at the hands of all sorts of Circassian savages.

In reply, I could only assure him that I considered the proposed mode of continuing our route as immeasurably the safest; that I would take care to exonerate him from all blame, whatever was the result; and, moreover, that he himself was at perfect liberty either to remain behind for the following post, or to take his chance of any troops or caravan passing in the interim.

This alternative, however, he declined; and, finding all further remonstrance useless, he prepared for the journey with all the patience and resignation of a martyr of the olden time.

Accordingly, four swift horses being harnessed to the carriage, we set forward. We were now in the rich plains of the Kabardas, which form the intervening space between the range of the Caucasus and the boundary of Russia Proper, and which, though generally

of an undulating nature, and intersected with hills of some magnitude as they approach the vast mountain-chain, was here as smooth and level as a sheet of water. The soil was of the richest description; and, should Fate ever decree that Peace revisit these fertile scenes, now laid waste and desolate by the blighting influence and misery of War, few parts of the empire will be found to equal it in fertility and produce.

As evening closed in, we reached the Russian military post, where we were to pass the night. It was a fortress, constructed with earthen ramparts, and garrisoned by three companies of infantry, a small detachment of Cossacks, (of the Don) and a party of artillery. It was surrounded by a deep, dry ditch crossed by a drawbridge, which was raised at retreat-beating, and lowered the next morning at daylight.

I had been so excited throughout the day, that, though somewhat fatigued on our arrival, on retiring to rest I could not sleep; so that, after some time spent in tossing and sprawling, I threw my pelisse around me, and

sauntered out into the open air. All around was calm, serene, and beautiful: the moon shone in cloudless majesty, and glanced upon the bright and glittering arms of the sentinels, whose measured tread alone disturbed the profound stillness and repose which reigned throughout the scene.

How lovely, and how tranquil! It was a night well adapted to banish from the mind every other feeling save that of peace and good-will to all, in accordance with His awful word, whose might and majesty in that lone hour could not fail to strike upon the beholder, and momentarily to banish from his mind the recollection that he was in the very heart of scenes of blood and slaughter. But hush!—what was that?

Swiftly, but cautiously and silently, the picquet for the night gathered, and lined the ramparts; a half-suppressed clang, as their arms were inspected, for the moment alone breaking in upon the silence which prevailed; while deeply and intently the attention of all was turned upon a dark speck which appeared on the distant horizon.

Slowly it passed away, and the men broke off. The charm was dissolved. I returned to my apartment, and once more sought my couch, from which I was only aroused by the drums of the garrison beating the réveillée.

The same evening we reached Catherinagrade, without any incident occurring worthy of notice, my companion declaring, upon our arrival, there must be some especial Providence to watch over and protect Englishmen in their travels, and myself in particular.

From hence the great road to the north may generally be traversed in comparative safety. A by-road, however, leading to the Hot Wells at Piatigorsk, from which we were a hundred and twenty versts, or about ninety English miles, distant, is by no means of an equally secure nature, being fully as hazardous as that which we had already traversed, from its being nearer the scene of action between the belligerents. It was by this route, however, our journey must be pursued; and, accordingly, the next morning at daybreak we resumed our march.

The scenery again opened into all the

beauty of the Caucasus, as we advanced; and at length we came upon a spot where we at once halted.

It was by the side of one of those numerous tributary streams of the Kouban, whose waters fertilize the rich soil of the Kabardas. The ground was level, but broken, at intervals, by groves of trees, and gentle slopes crowned with bushes of considerable magnitude, abounding in every description of wild flower, the rose, the myrtle, and the honeysuckle, all growing in luxuriant beauty around. The turf—the brightest in colour I ever beheld—possessed an appearance that many a rich proprietor in England might have envied for his park, or lawn, rendering it difficult to believe it existed in the state that nature planted it, wholly untouched either by the scythe or roller. But this was not all: close by the water's side, lay entire beds of the largest description of wild strawberry I have ever beheld, and fully as rich in taste and flavour as their appearance would have led you to expect, and with which it is almost needless to mention the whole party were very

soon off their horses to form a nearer acquaintance, not without some exclamations of wonder from the Persians, whose country, rich as it is in fruits, does not produce this.

But look forth upon the scene, reader, and magine yourself, if you can, from the insufficiently descriptive view portrayed of this earthly paradise, abounding in all that could gladden the heart of man—look forth, and figure yourself as standing by my side, and gazing around you;—in all the space that meets your sight, and far (alas! how far!) as the eye can reach, there exists not one single habitation, not one living soul; and the hottest, dreariest, and most desolate desert of Arabia is not more silent and abandoned than this scene, one of the brightest and loveliest spots in Nature's garden, the stillness of which is at times alone disturbed by the tramp of the war-charger, the clash of steel, and the shout of the conflict. Such is the blighting influence of war.

I was roused from the reverie into which I had fallen by the voice of my companion hint-

ing something about "brigands," and the danger of any further delay.

There is a period in life when a person's own thoughts are his best companions, and which, when broken in upon, (no matter how or wherefore) the interruption is resented as an intrusion with a more than usual degree of asperity. In such a mood was I at that moment, and which rendering the observation in question doubly harsh and grating to my ears, I was about returning a peevish and captious reply, when a minute's reflection taught me the reasonable nature of the suggestion, and, moreover, the folly of thus hazarding, by a further stay, the chance of an attack, by exposing our small number to the keen observation of any stray band of the mountaineers, who, ever on the watch, might be lurking in the neighbourhood, and perhaps even then in very unpleasant proximity to our halting-ground.

Accordingly, we once more resumed our saddles and continued our journey. We were within half a dozen versts of the next military post, when, from the point of a rising ground,

we beheld on the verge of the horizon a body of apparently about twenty horsemen, their arms shining brightly in the sunbeams, advancing rapidly in the direction we were moving.

"Steady, trot, keep the horses cool, and don't pull a trigger till you touch your man's eyebrow," was all that was requisite to issue in the way of orders; and with instructions to the drivers to push at full speed, and give the alarm to the picquet, who, from the short distance between us, however, we felt assured would be already on the alert on the first shot being fired, we kept steadily onward.

In another instant, however, we found that our fears and anticipations of danger were groundless as the cortège approached. They were a body of brilliantly-equipped cavaliers, equally as well mounted as ourselves, and would have proved very ugly customers to deal with; but the waving plumes and rich uniforms of three or four of the party at once proclaimed they could not be Circassians.

"C'est le Général-en-chef," said my companion; and so it proved—it being General

Grabbé, the commander of the forces on the line of the Kouban, who was making a tour of the outposts, escorted by a picked body of Cossacks of the Line.

They moved swiftly towards us, and had evidently, in approaching, taken in the character of our own cavalcade, as they passed us at a hand-gallop, the General courteously raising his hat in return to our salutation.

We were drawing towards the conclusion of our journey the following day, and within the last fifteen or twenty versts, when, considering ourselves now as perfectly secure from any further chance of molestation, from our close proximity to so large a garrison as that of Piatigorsk, we had both resumed our seats in the carriage. Somewhat fatigued with the day's riding, I had fallen into a deep slumber, from which I was suddenly awakened by a rocking, swinging motion, that, in the confusion of my ideas at the moment, almost led me to imagine I had been spirited away by some process of enchantment to the waters of the Black Sea, on the surface of which, in

some old, crazy, worn-out hulk, I was tossing and rolling, in one of its most truculent gales,[1] in all the discomfort imaginable.

I was quickly, however, aroused, and that with no slight degree of apprehension, to its real cause, which consisted in the tearing rate at which we were proceeding—(the horses actually flying at the very top of their speed,) and was about calling to the driver to stop, when—crash—over we went, over and over—at least, so it appeared to me—actually rolling from one side of the road to the other.

Now, indeed, began a scene of confusion, of which it would be utterly vain and futile to attempt anything like a description: every one spoke at once; and the Babel of languages, Russian, French, English, Turkish,

[1] In no part of the globe is the weather so fatally treacherous as here; it is from this circumstance that it is generally known among the Turks by the name of the "fanar gara deniz," or the bad Black Sea. In one gale alone, during the period I was on the Kouban, seven-and-twenty Russian vessels, men-of war and transports, destined for the scene of operations on the coast of Circassia, foundered, when all on board, with one or two solitary exceptions, perished.

and Persian, in which the shouts and execrations of the whole party found vent—the plunging and kicking of the horses—all united in presenting a picture that Captain Marryat, Mr. Theodore Hook, or any other skilful delineator of the ridiculous, could alone sufficiently and faithfully portray.

Confused, and momentarily stunned, I yet made desperate efforts to get through the window, in the course of which my attention for the first time became drawn to the situation of my companion, whose stifled exclamations, though they somewhat surprised me at first, were not to be wondered at, when I ascertained the cause, which consisted in my actually being seated on his face, thus engendering in his imagination sundry very disagreeable visions of suffocation.

There was, however, no time to apologize. With no slight difficulty, I succeeded in scrambling through the aperture of the window myself, and then, with the help of one of the Cossacks, dragged the dragoon out by the legs after me. One of my Persian domestics, with my friend's servant, who were in the

rumble behind, having given their horses to their companions to bring on, were shot through the air, with a velocity equal to what would have followed the explosion of a mine, plump into a quagmire of soft clay, from whence they arose most woefully besmirched, and, like their masters, in a towering passion —the more especially the former, whose neat and very handsome costume presented an appearance the very reverse of what it had exhibited but a few minutes previous.

For an instant after the discovery had been made that no broken bones had been the sequence to this disagreeable interlude in our journey, all parties glared around, as if in search of some object on which the wrath and spleen engendered thereby, bubbling and bursting like a bottle of cider within us, might safely be vented; unfortunately for him, the only object that presented itself was the driver, who, in consequence, forthwith became the centre of united and universal opprobrium.

The dragoon "sacré'd" away to perfection —the Tartars uttered a string of mashallahs

sufficient to have lasted the whole present generation of the faithful for half a century at least—the Persians burnt his father,[1] with an energy which Dr. Slop, in denouncing his anathema, and "Excommunicabo vos," to Tristram Shandy, might have envied — the Cossacks had recourse to the usual conciliating mode of remonstrance practised in Russia, and plied their whips upon his shoulders with a vigour and celerity which proved that the exercise to them was any thing but new; while I, carried away by the general liveliness and enthusiasm displayed on the occasion, uttered a not very long, but certainly strong, observation, addressed to his optics, which he possibly might have thought the hardest, could he but only have understood it.

The whole scene, however long it has taken in its narration, was actually but the work of a minute — overturning, shouting, pummelling, and all; but in a short time, the latter being suppressed, and the second with no slight difficulty quieted, grumbling and

[1] "Pedda sookhta," the usual shibboleth of an angry Persian.

growling, we resumed our route, and reached the Imperial Hotel at Piatigorsk without further incident the same evening—save and except a certain sniggering of suppressed laughter, which, borne upon the wind from the rear, occasionally came grating upon the ears of my companions in misfortune and myself in the carriage, and, of course, proceeded from those unfeeling rascals, who, safely ensconced in their saddles, had escaped all share in the phenomenon, which had thus so unpleasantly disturbed the quietude of our journey, as well as our gravity and serenity of temper.

CHAPTER IV.

Residence at and Excursions to and from the Baths.

I had been upwards of three weeks at Piatigorsk,[1] when I was invited by the hospitable Prince de G—— to join a picnic

[1] Piatigorsk is a Russian word signifying the "Five Mountains," at the base of which the small town, with its garrison, and the hot wells are situated. The various mineral baths lie within a distance of fifty-five or sixty versts of each other. They consist of the hot sulphur, (the strongest, perhaps, in the world,) the iron, and the sour waters. Their position is in the undulating plains approaching the lesser range of mountains towards the Caucasus. This part of the country was almost the first occupied when the subjection of its hardy race was resolved upon by the Russian Cabinet, its open and defenceless position wholly precluding any attempt at resistance. Notwithstanding, however, it has been so long occupied, it is still subject to the daring assaults and inroads of the fierce tribes of the higher Caucasus, particularly the Abazeks.

party he intended giving to several of the nobility assembled at the Wells, at a spot about fifteen versts from the town.

As this was the season when hostilities were in full and vigorous play with the mountaineers, the late sanguinary conflict at Adeler having so recently taken place, it was deemed advisable that the whole party should proceed together in a body; such a precaution at the present moment being doubly necessary, not merely from several prisoners having been made, and many cattle recently carried off, almost in the immediate neighbourhood, but from the circumstance of its having been officially notified, by the commanding officer of the station, that a picked body of Circassian horsemen had passed the Kouban, under one of their most daring and able chiefs, and warning strangers to be on their guard against wandering from the different posts without a sufficient escort.

It was a bright and glorious morning (such a morning as, perhaps, can alone be witnessed in the Caucasus) that our cavalcade assembled. Barouche, chariot, and drotsky, with

every description of carriage, being mingled with groups of gaily dressed and superbly mounted equestrians — the whole of which, surrounded by a strong party of Cossacks of the Line, whose striking and picturesque uniforms[1] and long lances glittering in the morning sun, gave added splendour to the scene.

For myself—but a few weeks (I may say days, previous) in the heart of Asia, and surrounded with beards, turbans, and flowing robes—was it by magic that I was thus, all at once, apparently transported back to Paris, or Vienna! Such, indeed, seemed the illusion, though in a brighter and far sunnier clime—the very appearance of our escort, in lieu of exciting ideas of danger, affording but additional excitement and animation to the glowing picture around; though the thoughts of all in that gay throng, among whom numbered some of the wealthiest and noblest of the Northern nobility, could not but revert to the gallant race at that moment struggling with desperate energy for (in their estima-

[1] The Cossacks of the Line have adopted the arms, clothing, and accoutrements of their Circassian adversaries.

tion) the first and most sacred of all earthly blessings—their mountain independence—as the wary and practised soldier carefully reconnoitred each copse and brake through which we passed, lest it should afford a cover from whence the mail-clad warriors of the Caucasus should rush upon their foe, or from whence their dreaded war-cry might issue.[1]

The custom of the day pours every species of scurrility and abuse upon the present Sovereign of Russia—and upon what charge? His ambition—and the licentiousness of the Western press heaps invective and malevolence upon one of whom they know nothing. Traverse this vast empire from one extremity to another, as I have done, and what is the universal character every where told, except by some discontented spirits, of this despotic tyrant?—as a man, as a father, as a sovereign, and, above all, as the stern and un-

[1] The war-cry of the Circassians is an imitation, frightfully resembling the reality, of the jackal. I have heard many Russian officers assert, that their most desperate onset never produced one-half the panic this fearful shout occasioned among the ranks of the soldiery, especially in an ambuscade.

flinching uprooter of those evils which ages of misrule have engendered in his government and country, and as the protector of the lower and middle classes of his subjects, whose condition every energy of his powerful mind is given to ameliorate and improve, and towards which he has done more than any monarch since the time of Peter the Great—let but these questions be asked, and the same answer will be returned throughout. But the many would-be philanthropists exclaim—His ambition has blotted the name of ill-fated, unhappy Poland from the map of nations, and now would exterminate the gallant tribes of the Caucasus, (in whose cause every generous soul must sympathize)—and all for the purpose of destroying the British commerce in the Black Sea, and rendering it a Russian lake, (which to all intents and purposes it *now* most assuredly is,)—overthrowing our oldest and most faithful ally, the Sultan, the only one who, through good and bad, had invariably adhered to us, (and, par consequence, the one we have as often on every occasion deserted,) and rendering him the

mere vassal of his arbitrary designs, (which nobody can doubt he at present is,) and overturning our commerce in Central Asia; which he very soon will, unless prevented by the energy, wisdom, and vigour of the Indian Government; to which Power alone, I have heard foreigners of high rank and military standing remark, not merely England, but all Europe, must turn, as the only check and barrier to Northern conquest and ambition.

Such are the leading points of accusation brought against the Emperor; and, admitting their correctness in every way to the fullest extent, who have the British nation to blame but themselves? In the Polish struggle, when that heroic people were struck down by their gigantic opponent, did the drunken toasts of lip-heroism and vituperative boasting, bellowed from the London taverns, or the scurrility, falsehood, and abuse, every where poured upon the Russian Sovereign and his nation, render them any assistance in their last struggle? Did it not rather serve to aggravate the feelings of hatred and bitterness which already subsisted between the van-

quished and their successful foe? The same course of proceeding seems to have been adopted in the fierce conflict now raging in the Caucasus between the gallant mountaineers and their invaders—but will it avail the former in their sacred contest for life, home, and liberty?

If the designs of Russia, or the ambition of its ruler, threaten danger to British interests, let it at once be avowed, and the storm met in a manner becoming England's glory. The British Lion *once* was wont to strike; erect, dignified, and openly, he met the assault of his foe—the noblest feelings of generosity and chivalry mingling with his anger. Is our national character, then, so utterly sunk and degraded, that this system of pitiful and spiteful hostility is the only resource left? and which, wholly unproductive of any good whatever, in the event of a struggle between the two nations (which is daily, it may be said hourly, drawing nearer), will lend to the contest nought but all the virulence of private hatred, with the most malignant inveteracy. But enough: the errors of successive admi-

nistrations alone have placed Russia in her present threatening position; for who can blame her that she took advantage of our incapacity and folly to forward those views of ambition which, transmitted as an heir-loom from the time of the accession of the house of Romanoff, her cabinet has ever been actively and vigilantly on the watch to extend? or, rather, it may be said, the ignorance of the people of England, united with their factious domestic brawling and party animosity, which, by checking and controlling her government and rulers, has sacrificed the best interests of the kingdom at the voice and command, or to the insane counsels, of insidious and unprincipled demagogues?

We bowled gaily and gallantly along, the time being enlivened by the mimic conflicts of our escort, whose dexterity in the management of their horses and arms was most admirable, and scarcely to be surpassed. A period of rather less than two hours brought us to the scene of our intended festivity. A spot more singularly wild, picturesque, and beautiful it is impossible to imagine. It was a kind of

glade, being one among many situated on an extent of turf which, for smoothness and colour, seemed to rival the finest velvet, divided by one of the small yet tempestuous and foaming streams of the mountains. To our right rose the magnificent and majestic Elborooz, towering in the midst of its eternal snows, like some mighty despot in the midst of his satellites, so comparatively insignificant, when placed in juxtaposition, appeared the lofty range of the Caucasus. The day, as I have previously observed, was strikingly clear and beautiful; and never, perhaps, had the gorgeous spectacle before us been seen to higher advantage than on the present occasion.

We here found a strong party of infantry drawn up, with the band of one of the regiments of the garrison, who, during the early dinner provided by the hospitality of the prince, beguiled the time with some of the choicest pieces of Mozart, Weber, and Bellini. No sooner was our repast finished, than a gay and mirthful scene ensued, the woods and valleys around echoing to the cheerful and

lively strains of the dance, the waltz, and the mazurka.

I know not what feeling it was (but I well remembered it afterwards) that caused me, in the course of a quadrille, to glance around, and attentively observe the spectators. They consisted, apparently, entirely of our guards and escort, who, with pleased and animated countenances, were gazing on the dancers, with the exception of some few women and children, the families of the soldiery, and perhaps half a dozen persons wearing the rough clothing, and to outward appearance possessed of all the boorishness, of Russian serfs.

It was late, and the moon had risen before our party separated, being much tired, yet infinitely more delighted with our excursion. As the night was uncommonly clear, and the caravan pace we should have been obliged to keep at, in the event of our returning in the same manner we came, was by no means to the taste of either my companion (Captain V——, of the Grenadiers of the Imperial Guard) or myself, I proposed our at once

proceeding onward, to which, on his readily acquiescing, I directed the coachman to push on, who accordingly had whipped his horses into a gallop, when the officer commanding the escort called to him to stop.

This gentleman, on approaching the carriage, remonstrated in the strongest terms upon our proceeding alone when parties of the mountaineers were known to be hovering near. We thanked him for his consideration and politeness, but informing him, as we mustered six persons well armed (my two Persian domestics being in the rumble behind, with my friend's valet, in addition to the coachman and ourselves), we had not the least apprehension, he very reluctantly allowed us to proceed on our way to the town, where we arrived without the slightest accident, although, at a turning in the road, as we came full upon it, we could not forbear detaining the carriage eight or ten minutes to gaze once more upon the old patriarch Elborooz, shining in the clear moonlight, his whole appearance being rendered, if possible, more majestic and imposing at this time than by day.

The principal of the five mountains, from which the town of Piatigorsk takes its name, is the "Maschouka," about five and twenty or thirty yards up the ascent of which is the mouth of a gouffre or cavern, possessed of a reputation by no means the most favourable with the whole of the neighbouring population, whether Russian, Circassian, Cossack, or Tartar, it being known by the ominous cognomen of the "Sheitan Munzilee," a word in the latter language signifying the Devil's abode. Several of my Russian friends had long thought of the possibility of exploring it; and it was at length proposed by Captain V——, whom I have already alluded to, to the Count de L——, a nobleman of illustrious family, an officer of chasseurs, and myself to make the attempt. Accordingly, having devoted some days for the purpose of more minutely surveying the gouffre, and making the requisite arrangements, on the 27th July, the latter being completed, we resolved to undertake the adventure, and, accompanied by the Prince de G——, and several other friends, proceeded to the spot.

The entrance of the cavern formed a circumference of about fifty feet, while its perpendicular descent, we were afterwards led to believe, varying from three hundred to three hundred and twenty, and occasionally narrowing and increasing in width, offered no impediment in its course downwards to the bottom, which we could observe formed a sheet of water apparently covering the whole. Having constructed a platform on the edge, surmounted with two thick poles with a traverse beam, a strong coil of rope was rove through a pulley in the centre of the latter, to the end of which was attached a stick, which, placed between the legs, would form a support in the descent.

In some measure to ascertain the depth of the water, we disengaged a heavy fragment of rock, and let it fall,—a heavy, sullen plunge succeeded, evidently betokening the water to be of some depth. We now commenced our preparations, and, having cast lots to decide who should commence, it fell upon Count de L——. To guard against the possibility of our meeting any troublesome occu-

pants, who might be disposed to resent this sudden and unexpected invasion of their subterranean abode, each took the precaution of being provided with pistols, and the formidable Circassian kummur[1], or short sword.

All being ready, a small but strong raft, with a couple of paddles, was lowered down, and the Count, taking a pistol from his belt, to be held in readiness, quickly followed;—it was a nervous spectacle, but, after some minutes of suspense, we had the satisfaction of seeing the gallant nobleman reach the platform in safety.

It was now my turn. I had commenced the descent, and was about a third of the way

[1] The Circassians carry two swords, the one, a long straight sabre, being much the same description of blade as that carried in our regiments of Light Cavalry, and is chiefly used when on horseback; the other, in length, make, and breadth, closely resembling the old Roman sword, which, indeed, many antiquaries suppose to be altogether the same. This last is slung in their girdle towards the left side, and, in their close conflicts with the Russian infantry, is the weapon most particularly dreaded, from the dexterity with which it is wielded, one single stroke sufficing in general to sever the limb it encounters, while, from the stab it inflicts, recovery is almost utterly hopeless.

down, when an accident occurred which had well nigh left me the task of adorning instead of telling a tale, and which arose from one of the three Russian soldiers who had charge of the rope venturing to look over the ledge, when, terrified at the fancied peril of my situation, or rendered giddy by gazing from the height, he fell back upon his companions, to whom he appeared to communicate his own terrors, when they all at once let slip the rope, which spun through the block with tremendous velocity. I shouted at the utmost pitch of my voice, but fortunately my friend V—— perceived the danger, and, springing forward, seized hold of the cord, and by his voice and example brought the men to their senses. I was thus fortunately enabled to reach the bottom in safety.

It required but two minutes, as soon as we could distinctly discern what was around us, to perceive that our adventure scarce repaid the risk we had encountered, and was here terminated; as, on being joined by V——, and having ferried round the entire circumference, no further signs of any outlet ap-

peared visible, the sides being a mass of solid rock, while the only inhabitants were a myriad of bats, and some half a dozen owls, the latter of whom seemed to view our unexpected intrusion with a mingled air of offended dignity and indignation. The water was as bright and clear as crystal, and seemed so equally impregnated with sulphur and salt, that neither of us could determine which of these minerals seemed most to predominate.

After passing about a quarter of an hour in our subterranean abode, we made the signal to be drawn up; and thus terminated our adventure, the news of which, I know not why, but, in all probability, from the exaggerated description of the dangers attending it, caused a considerable sensation among all classes at the time; so much so, that, on its reaching the ears of the commander-in-chief, the considerate and highly distinguished General Grabbé, to guard against any other person attempting it a second time, he sent peremptory orders for all our apparatus for effecting it to be de-

stroyed, and forbidding any similar construction for such a purpose in future.

Twelve versts[1] to the north-west of Piatigorsk is an excessively steep, but, considering the average height of the Caucasus, not a very high mountain, to which also, from reasons I never could clearly understand, is attached by the country people a feeling at once partaking both of dread and veneration. It is known to all classes by the name of the "Serpents' Mountain," though from what or whence the term is derived appears utterly unknown; the legend most generally prevalent, however, being, that it was formerly filled with these noxious reptiles, till expelled by some celebrated saint, but of what persuasion, whether Christian, Mahometan, or Pagan, does not appear.

Previous to my arrival, it was generally believed that the foot of mortal being had seldom, if ever, previously trod its summit; and I cannot say whether it was this circumstance or not which caused a resolve, on the

[1] A verst is about three-quarters of a mile.

part of my two friends and myself, to explore it. Accordingly, on the morning of the 4th of August, we determined to try the experiment; and, to have a long day before us for the purpose of doing so, determined to proceed to the German Colony[1] on the evening of the third, for the purpose of sleeping there, this place being only four versts distant from the foot of the mountain.

Unfortunately, within a few hours of starting, V—— was seized with a dizziness in the head, for which he was then under treatment at the baths, in consequence of which Count L—— and myself were obliged to set out alone. My companion had already engaged a trusty guide, a Circassian of the Apkhazie, (who had already previously accompanied him in several of his sporting excursions,) and two Nogais Tartars to accompany us, under whose superintendence we deemed it the most prudent course to proceed without escort, since

[1] Throughout the whole of the Caucasian Provinces are colonies of Germans, possessed by Imperial Ukase of considerable privileges; they are chiefly agriculturists, and are in general sober, orderly, and well-conducted communities.

both of us had long since been well convinced that, while solitary travellers, or persons accompanied by large convoys, generally moved in safety[1], others who proceeded with smaller ones were invariably attacked.

We reached the colony without any accident, and the following day, about four o'clock, rose, and proceeded on our enterprise. We found the ascent fatiguing enough, as we had anticipated; but, if we experienced this at the commencement, we soon found it was child's play to that which awaited us as

[1] Too much security, however, is never felt, even with the largest force, as, in the year 1836, the guard escorting the post between Vladicaucase and Catherinagrade, (the high road between Southern Russia and the Caucasian Provinces,) and composed of two squadrons of Cossacks, a battalion of infantry, and four guns, was attacked, when a sanguinary conflict took place, in which, though the mountaineers were ultimately beaten off, they retreated with comparatively trifling loss, having not only severely handled their adversaries, but carried off a considerable booty and many prisoners. A Mr. S——, a German traveller, whom I met at Teflis, who also on one occasion was placed in the latter-mentioned unpleasant predicament, informed me that *he* was captured to the northward of Stavrapool, the headquarters of the commander-in-chief on the Kouban, and no great distance from the native frontier of Russia itself.

we approached the summit, the height appearing greater and far more difficult as each step brought us nearer to it. At length, half-dead with fatigue, after nearly four hours' constant exertion, when about three-fourths of our task had been completed, we found ourselves brought to a stand-still on a species of platform, at the foot of what appeared an absolutely perpendicular face of rock, reaching, if not the whole way, most certainly a considerable portion of what remained of the distance yet to be accomplished.

Having rested ourselves, we proceeded to reconnoitre the possibility of our advancing further. A minute's glance sufficed to convince us there was but one method. The thick, high grass, through which we had waded on our route up, afforded a sufficiently strong hold to cling to, and our guide and myself at once declared that by this mode only, therefore, and trusting to our nerves and sinews, must our ascent be accomplished.

The Nogais Tartars, and even the Count himself, were a little startled, and somewhat demurred as to this mode of proceeding;

which, as the latter laughingly observed, however ordinary and indifferent to mountain-cats, Highlanders, Circassians, and other wild animals, was anything but such a commonplace affair to himself and our other two attendants, who had passed almost the whole of their lives on horseback in the plains.

Convinced, however, that no other resource was left, unless the undertaking was altogether abandoned, he acquiesced, and we again resumed our labours. We had not, however, proceeded more than a hundred yards, before first one, and then the other, of the Nogais paused, and then quietly slid down upon the platform again. We continued our route, and, after a considerable time, with every limb strained to the utmost, (which they long after remembered,) and not a few bruises, our arms half hauled off, and repeatedly being like Mahomet's coffin, swinging betwixt heaven and earth, we at length reached a spot from whence we were enabled to make an easy walk to the summit, where we fairly sunk down, quite exhausted.

The view was not, after those I had pre-

viously seen, particularly remarkable for either magnificence or beauty; it, however, commanded a full prospect of the rich valleys and fertile fields of the German colony, and one or two Tartar villages, in which the women and children were busily employed in gathering in the harvest.

After half an hour's rest, and having written our names, with the day of the month, and year, in an excavation of the rock, extending about three feet inward, and sufficiently large to have proved a valuable shelter for us, had we been caught in any of the mountain mists, we commenced our descent; and having again rested on the platform, and picked up our Tartan allies, continued our downward route, and reached the base of the mountain at about half-past three in the afternoon. Here we found our horses, under the care of the boy in whose charge we had left them, cropping the rich pasture around, on the borders of a field in which three old men and two boys were employed in gathering in the corn, one of whom, with the Count and the two Nogais, proceeded to the village a few yards distant,

for the purpose of procuring some bread and milk, as, having eaten nothing since four in the morning, it may easily be supposed, after so much exertion, we were all somewhat faint, as well from hunger as fatigue.

My companion had scarcely quitted me, and I had thrown myself at full length on the turf, when I was aroused by a singular circumstance, which consisted in the sudden and unexpected appearance of a young man, at the sight of whom, the whole party, with the exception of myself, sprang to their feet, with feelings of the deepest respect, though strongly mingled with terror, visibly depicted in their countenances. Whoever he was, it was very evident he was not prepared to meet *me*, for on the instant he plunged his hand into the loose camel's-hair riding-cloak that enfolded his person, an example that I lost no time in following; for, sooth to say, however convenient it may have been to *appear* unarmed, I by no means liked the idea of the reality; accordingly, in a belt under my coat lay quietly deposited my trusty kummur and pistols.

Whatever may have been the intentions of the new comer, he suddenly checked himself; and, glancing his large, full, stern eye upon me, he addressed my Circassian guide in a language I had never previously heard, and which I imagined to be one of the mountain dialects of the Caucasus, since my acquaintance with the Tartar-Turkish made me aware it was not that of the Nogais.

The mountaineer replied in what appeared to me to be a respectful and deprecating manner, when, in the course of a conversation of two or three minutes' duration which ensued between them, during which I could only distinguish repeated mention of the word "Iugliz, Iugliz," I had an opportunity of fully and narrowly observing the person who had thus made such an apparently uneasy addition to our society, and whose appearance and bearing towards myself were certainly not of a nature to cause me to relax my hold of the pistol I still grasped, while I kept my attention vigilantly employed upon his slightest movement.

He appeared, as far as I could judge, to be

about seven or eight-and-twenty, rather tall, and though his figure was slight and elegant in the extreme, it required but a single glance only to be aware that it was at the same time as muscular and active as a panther's. His countenance struck me as the handsomest I had ever met with, even in that land of beauty and nobility of form;—it was dark, and deeply embrowned by habitual exercise and constant exposure to the sun and all weathers; but the features, in the finest line of Grecian sculpture, rivalled the choicest busts of antiquity in their classic outline and expressive character; his large, lustrous, dark eye, never once withdrawn from the fixed gaze with which he had regarded me from the first, gleamed with a fierceness almost approaching to ferocity, but gradually subsided as his dialogue with his countryman continued.

As he concluded his conference, his countenance cleared, and he advanced towards me. "Gorkmah,[1]" he said, addressing me in

[1] Fear not.

Turkish, in a bold, confident, and manly tone, for, hardly knowing what would be the result of his movement, my hand instinctively half drew out and disclosed the but of the pistol; but his voice and manner at once caused me to discard all distrust, and half ashamed to put it back.

"You are," he continued, frankly extending his hand, "the English officer of whom I have heard so much; and," he added, looking towards the mountain, "as if the adventure of the Sheitan Munzilee were not enough, you have again been busy in establishing the reputation of your countrymen, who, where they cannot succeed in either breaking the bones of their neighbours or themselves in an ordinary manner, seek every other fitting opportunity of jeopardizing their necks; considerately inviting any who feel similarly inclined to follow so laudable an example. I did not at first recognise you," he continued, in the same tone of raillery, "in that costume (an English shooting-dress), and must confess you appeared to much higher advantage in that brilliant uniform when, at the Prince de

G——'s party in the forest, you were so deeply engaged with the beautiful Emmeline de V——."

Though disposed to return an angry reply to these sarcastic remarks, I could not help starting at their conclusion; for the recollection flashed upon me at once how minutely and attentively I had on that occasion regarded the spectators around us, while standing by the side of the lady whose name he had mentioned, and yet this very being before me, whose countenance I had never previously beheld (for once seen, it was not likely to be forgotten), and who, I was impressed with the conviction, entertained no very friendly disposition towards the Russian authorities, must not only have been on the spot, but in the very midst of the hostile soldiery, during the event he alluded to.

The mountaineer seemed to guess, and to enjoy, the feelings of perplexity and wonder which possessed me.

"Is it not singular," he continued in the same sarcastic manner, "that the Muscovite and the Englishman, whom the world describe

as the bitterest, though as yet unavowed, enemies of each other, should here be found in the closest bond of union and friendship?"

I replied coldly, that our nations were not at war, and that, even if they were, and the contest assumed the appearance of being the most sanguinary the world had ever witnessed, even then, it would not uproot the feelings of esteem which individuals of each nation might entertain for the other.

"'Tis well," he said, while his tone changed to one of frank cordiality; "but let me at parting caution you on one point:—beware, in future, how you stir beyond the Russian outposts; the neighbourhood is not a safe one, and you may venture *once too often*." In saying these words, he disappeared.

He had scarcely quitted us, before the Count returned, to whom our guide hastily communicated, in the Russian language, what I conjectured to be an account of what had passed. He appeared in the first instance to be perfectly incredulous, and then a good deal startled when he had heard from me a statement corroborative of what had occurred.

He perhaps had some cause for apprehension, being an active and distinguished officer, who had on more than one occasion signalized himself in the mountain campaigns of the Caucasus.

We reached Piatigorsk in the evening; the Count observing to me on parting, in what I thought was a somewhat significant manner, that our adventure had been well and fortunately accomplished. Whether there was more in this than met the ear, is left to the reader's imagination; perhaps after what I have related, he will agree with me, and think there was; at least, this impression was not lessened, when we heard, on our return, that official information had been forwarded to the commandant, apprizing him that the body of Circassian cavalry, whom I have already mentioned as having, under one of their most enterprising and able chiefs, passed the Kouban, had already surprised and cut off several of the advanced posts.

The next morning found me so extremely stiff in all my limbs, but more particularly in the arms, that I could scarcely move; nor

was it till several days afterwards that, by the use of the hot baths, I got rid of this disagreeable sequence to our mountain adventure.

It was towards the middle of August that I took my departure for the Sour Waters at Kislavosk. As I shall, in another chapter, more particularly describe the whole of the different baths of the Caucasus, I shall very casually revert to them here, and only then in instances where any descriptive passage is requisite for the elucidation of any point of the narrative that may require it. Our party was here joined by three other officers of the guard, who were serving as volunteers in the army of the Caucasus,[1] my first acquaintance with one of whom, since it has subsequently ripened into intimacy, not only with himself, but the whole of his family, I may here relate, since it was somewhat amusing from its singularity.

[1] Several of the younger officers of the Imperial Guard are annually sent from St. Petersburg to serve the spring and summer campaigns in the Caucasus, for the purpose of acquiring military experience.

He wore the uniform of the Cuirassiers of the Imperial Guard, but the bluff, red, good-looking countenance, perfectly English manner and bearing, and, above all, his fluency of language, not only free from the slightest foreign accent, but partaking somewhat of a broad Yorkshire dialect, all struck me with so much astonishment, that I involuntarily exclaimed, "What the devil! are you an Englishman?" He laughed as he replied, he could not claim that honour further than the possession of the language, together with a devoted attachment to Old England, and everything belonging to her. His name was L——i, he was of a noble Russian family, and had, he informed me, been educated under an English clergyman, though from the circumstance of his nurse having been from the north, he had never wholly got rid of the accent he had acquired from her when a child.

A few days after my arrival, a party of ten or twelve of us were out enjoying the pleasures of the chase, and, carried away by the ardour of the sport, we felt but little

disposed to listen to the remonstrances of one or two of the more prudent among our number, who more than once reminded us we had got far beyond the Russian line, and were full ten or twelve versts in the enemy's country. On we went, however, scampering through the rich valleys, and up and down the various hills, till after several hours, our horses being pretty well jaded, and ourselves rendered extremely hungry, we halted for some time at a small grove, on the brow of a hill, commanding an extensive view of the superb scenery in our front, which, occasionally broken in upon by knots of trees and rising, undulating mounds, seemed one continued carpet of green verdure.

In the course of half an hour some of the party were again mounted, others were engaged in tightening their girths, while some had not even yet finished the more important duties in which their masticatory organs were still employed, when two or three of the former, who had ridden half way down and were gazing on the scene before them, all at once wheeled their horses round, and, with

considerable dismay painted in their countenances, and calling out, *au grand galop, les montagnards*, darted down the opposite side of the hill, in which they were quickly followed by all the rest, with the exception of L——i and myself, the delay on my part being occasioned, in the first place, by my very imperfectly understanding what had been the cause of this sudden confusion; and again, being at the same moment occupied in arranging the saddle-girths, while the attention of my companion was more seriously bent upon a large sandwich and a pint bottle of champagne, in the diligent discussion of which he was employed at the time.

Our delay seemed to cause considerable impatience, and not a few execrations, on the part of our companions, who, of course, could not leave us behind; and one of whom, a short, stout, corpulent, elderly gentleman immediately rode back, and, darting an angry glance at me, bitterly reproached my companion for his hair-brained folly, in thus hazarding the lives of the whole party by his dilatory supineness. We, however, soon

mounted, and, on rejoining the party, and inquiring into the cause of this sudden confusion, were at once informed, that about three or four hundred yards immediately in our front, twelve or fifteen men were observed stealthily gliding from one cluster of underwood to another.

All were now turned for instant flight; when, raising my voice, I pointed out the consequences of such an ill-advised measure, since, if the persons who had been seen possessed any hostile intention, they would soon overtake us, their horses being much fresher than ours, and their numbers, in all probability, ten times as numerous; that from the greater part of us wearing the costume of the country, it was impossible, at that distance, for them to have ascertained whether we were a party of Cossacks of the line, or a detachment from their own body, but that the slightest signs of flight on our part would at once determine our real character, and give the signal for an immediate pursuit. I further suggested, that our best course of proceeding would be to descend to the valley at the foot

of the hill, which, by an even though circuitous course, led direct to the town and post of Kislavosk, and which would sometimes expose us to, but more generally exclude us from, the view of our opponents, between whom and ourselves, by moving along at a slow trot, we should then place some distance, without blowing our horses, should they feel inclined to pursue; till, having fairly got a good start, and successive hills having wholly closed all sight of us from those in our rear, we could then ply whip and spur, and try who could soonest verify the old proverb of, "devil take the hindmost."

This advice, which was warmly seconded by L——i and several others, was finally agreed to, and we commenced our retreat not without sundry misgivings, and frequent turnings of the head over the shoulder from the whole party; when, having gained our vantage ground without any pursuit or molestation, off we started, flying like the wind, keeping, as the old saying has it, "one spur in, and the other never out;" the whole bringing most forcibly to my remembrance an

exactly similar scene that had occurred once in life to me before, in which a part of the force I belonged to, having succeeded in getting into an ambuscade, those possessed of swift horses, strong arms, and good luck, succeeded in clearing their way through, the survivors merely leaving three-fourths of their original number behind them.

Better fortune, however, attended us this time, as we reached Kislavosk without the slightest danger, except what resulted from the various mountain-streams which crossed us in our flight, and which, in some places of great depth and running with extreme violence, were not passed without some hazard, though so admirably trained were our gallant chargers, that no other inconvenience was the result than an occasional cold bath to our lower extremities, reaching, however, at times up to the breast.

On arriving at the advanced picquets, we were surprised to find a small party of Circassians, consisting of four men and two boys, who were placed under custody of the sentry. In answer to our inquiries, the non-com-

missioned officer commanding stated that the strictest orders had arrived only an hour before from the commandant, directing that all persons or parties arriving from the interior should, on no account, be allowed to pass beyond the outposts, but detained there till the following morning. We exchanged glances at this information, and, at L——i's suggestion, I questioned the *détenus*, who, with apparently the utmost coolness and indifference, stood regarding us.

The oldest, in reply, informed me that they were men of peace, and had merely come to Kislavosk for the purpose of making arrangements regarding the sale of some cattle. This was said quietly and carelessly, with an air partaking either of confidence in its truth, or of defiance as to any proof being adduced to the contrary; there was, however, it struck me at the time, a slight, *very* slight, sardonic expression lurking in the fine, well-schooled features of his companions, as if in derision of his pacific avowal.

We passed on, some impression being made by this incident on the minds of two or three

of our party (myself among the number), who had previously expressed some sceptical and sarcastic remarks as to the reality of the danger from which we had so recently retreated, it being very clear, from what we had just witnessed, that the commanding officer of the station had received information of some troublesome persons being in the neighbourhood.

There was a grand ball to take place this evening: from the house in which I lodged a footpath led to the shrubbery, which surrounded the Assembly-rooms where it was held. The night was dark in the extreme—so much so, in fact, that it was barely possible to see a yard before me; however, I had traversed the route in question so often, that, with the blaze of light in the rooms before me as a guide, I could not well diverge from it.

I was within a short distance of the plantation, when all at once I was surprised, and certainly a good deal startled, by hearing, almost close to me, "Who goes there?"

It was not the usual prompt, sharp, and

ringing challenge of the sentinel, but that tone of voice so difficult to describe, though so well understood, which heralds an ambuscade, night-attack, or other service of a secret nature. Deeply and intently I endeavoured to pierce into the murky veil which everywhere surrounded me, and, rendered familiar with the darkness, I at length distinctly made out, not half a dozen yards from the spot where I stood, the dim outline of the figure of a Russian soldier, of whose near proximity I was not aware till that instant, and from whom the challenge issued. I made the requisite answer, and passed on; not without considerable surprise, mingled with some slight degree of anxiety at this unexpected phenomenon, which was by no means decreased on hearing, on either side, at some little distance, a low, murmuring sound, gradually rising and falling, which a practised ear would have at once distinguished as the gathering in secresy and silence of a large body of disciplined men.

On entering the ball-room, I could not help observing that the features of the Com-

mandant, Colonel P——, (a German, on whose usually calm and imperturbable face I had previously supposed nothing but the shock of an absolute earthquake under his feet would have produced the slightest impression), appeared to wear an expression of doubt and thoughtful anxiety, which gave a triple proportion of gravity to his solemn countenance.

The ball, however, proceeded merrily, the waltz, the galoppe, and the graceful mazurka following each other in rapid succession.

It was after a turn in the former that I was standing with my partner at one of the half-open windows, leading out upon the balcony, when gazing upwards at the few stars which now glimmering in the heavens made it apparent the darkness was about to subside, I suddenly felt a pressure on the arm, followed by the half-startled exclamation of "Grand Dieu!—qu'est ce que c'est que cela? —écoutez."

"Ce n'est rien," I replied carelessly, "encore un tour." On the completion of which,

however, having handed my partner to her seat, I glanced once more at the Commandant, being firmly convinced that if ever in the course of my life I had heard the rumbling of artillery, it had been a few minutes previous, which, coupled with what I had already witnessed, led me to believe that the present drama stood some chance of being brought to a bloody termination, for which it was now but too evidently apparent every preparation had been made! At the time my attention was again turned upon Colonel P—, he was, accompanied by his Adjutant, about re-entering the ball-room, from which he had been for a moment absent, the expression of anxiety which had previously marked his features having disappeared, and it struck me (for I was not near enough to say with certainty) that he seemed to heave a long and deep-drawn breath, as of a person delivered from a heavy and painful burthen.

It was nearly an hour past midnight; the ladies, having partaken of the light refection usually served at the termination of a fête,

had all withdrawn, and the others were about to follow the example, previous to the final breaking-up of the party, when I stepped forward once more to the balcony, and there at once beheld, as if by a stroke of magic, a full confirmation of all my suspicions!

What a magnificent—what a glorious scene! The darkness had wholly and entirely disappeared, and in its place the blue firmament of heaven (of which those who have traversed the isles of Greece in the summer season can form a good conception) glittered with a myriad of stars, and, with the moon blazing in a splendour which rendered the light almost equivalent to that of day, fell upon the bright and bristling array of a forest of lances and bayonets, which glistened in its beams, extended in circles, so as to cover every approach to the place! The Cossack, wrapped in his cloak, lay at the head of his horse, which, ready saddled and bridled, stood picqueted by his lance; the infantry, in companies, slept extended in their ranks, with their arms piled in lines before them; while the artillerymen were stretched beside their guns, save the few

who, with lighted matches, stood prepared to act on the instant!

While still gazing upon, and admiring, the brilliant spectacle before me, I was suddenly roused by hearing my name shouted in a dozen voices from the supper-room, on entering which I received the ironical congratulations of all my friends on my approaching *début* as the soldier of his Imperial Majesty the Emperor of Russia, since, whatever *might* have been my choice of either of the belligerent powers, I had at the present moment no option from being with them.

It appeared that early in the morning information had been conveyed to the commanding officer that the body of Circassians who had passed the Kouban had resolved upon an attack that night upon the place, and warned him to be prepared. The notice was short, and time pressed; the garrison consisted of only one weak battalion and a party of Cossacks; accordingly, the most pressing requisitions were sent to the neighbouring posts for reinforcements. Unwilling to alarm the ladies, and aware that the assault, if it

did take place, would not occur till towards morning, the Commandant deemed it the most advisable to keep the intelligence confined to himself and his Adjutant till after their departure, when he communicated to those present what was likely to occur.

This intelligence, as may naturally be supposed, caused some sensation among us all, though the almost universal opinion was it would terminate in nothing, since the mountaineers were too wily to hazard an attack where the chances were so much against them, (the more especially with the terrible remembrance before them of their previous assault upon this place[1]), and would be made aware, on their approach, by some of their secret friends, of the formidable force which

[1] In the year 1835 an attack was made upon Kislavosk by the Circassians, for the purpose of carrying off a large quantity of cattle at that time there, but the assailants, being composed of a very small number, and wholly of cavalry, were beaten off with considerable slaughter, men and horses being alike mowed down by a murderous cross fire of grape and canister from the guns of the fort, and the musketry of the infantry who lined the houses of the town.

awaited them, from the reinforcements which had poured in from all sides.

It was towards three o'clock; our party had broke up, and we were mingled in different parts of the ranks, when a low, bubbling noise came upon the ear—it ceased, but was again distinctly heard, and at length gradually increased, till, although still at some distance, a practised ear could distinguish the rushing sound of a body of horse advancing at speed. I listened, with attention stretched to the utmost, till I believe I could with distinctness have heard the sound of a leaf stirring, when the silence of the night was at once broken in upon by the long roll of the drum, answered by the calls of the trumpet and bugle; and in less than five minutes the serrated ranks stood prepared, steady, but almost with the same stillness as before.

A quarter of an hour elapsed, the noise had ceased, and we could see the lance-blades of the Cossack videttes glittering in the moonlight, as they sat motionless in their saddles, in the track from whence our assailants were expected.

Some further time passed, and, at length, the nearest half squadron to the main road, throwing out its skirmishers, advanced along it at a brisk trot, several of us spurring to the front and following it. After a ride of three versts, we were brought to a dead halt; for there, full in our front, stood a massive, dense column of horsemen, not three hundred yards distant, a little detached from whom, and somewhat again in advance, were a group of eight or ten persons, one conspicuous among the rest, whose gleaming helmets and coats of mail flashed with a brilliant radiance in the bright moonlight beams, while in apparently deep and earnest conversation with them were several persons on foot, imparting, we felt at once convinced, every information regarding our movements.

The individual who, by his air and manner, seemed the leader of the band, on our halting, suddenly put his gallant horse in motion, and rode singly towards us; his immediate followers, however, almost directly imitating his example, though at a walk only, apparently

as if to be in readiness to support him, should occasion require.

At once a rush and a whirr were heard from the rear of our party, the herald of half a dozen rockets, which flew into the air, and, with the accompaniment of a couple of blue-lights, cast a perfect glare of light over the whole scene!

The Circassian chieftain advanced, halted, and, then again moving his horse from one point to another, seemed earnestly and attentively to regard our ranks and numbers. He was so near that any Cossack of the party might have shot him, a result, I will freely confess, I sat shivering with anxiety, expecting every moment to see. Suddenly he turned, and rejoined his men on the spur, when, almost immediately afterwards, the persons I have previously mentioned as having stood near him on foot plunged into the neighbouring bushes and disappeared, while the whole column wheeled about, and slowly and leisurely cantered away.

We gazed after them as they departed, my

whole attention never for one instant withdrawn from their chief, in whose person I felt convinced I once more beheld the haughty and imperious yet noble and chivalrous bearing of—my Friend of the Mountain!

CHAPTER V.

Residence at and Excursions to and from the Baths—(*continued*).

It was some time after our prudent and timely retreat (I use the term as I have seen it applied in public despatches, when referring to events of an exactly similar nature) and subsequent blockade at Kislavosk, before either my companions or myself felt any inclination to resume our accustomed rambles, that unexpected and rather untoward adventure having produced a salutary impression, by frightening us into a prudential circumspection, which all the remonstrances and warnings of the kind-hearted old commandant had hitherto failed in producing, and which was heightened by the subsequent information that

the assailants, foiled in their intended attack upon this post, had suddenly wheeled about and fallen upon another some twelve or fourteen versts distant, which it had cut off to a man, carrying away some valuable horses, a large supply of ammunition, and a considerable number of oxen and other cattle.

It was at this period that I became acquainted with several of those illustrious and unfortunate exiles, who, pardoned at the intercession of the noble-hearted, young Grand Duke Alexander, in his journey through Siberia, had recently arrived in the Caucasus from those dreary regions, to a residence in which they had originally been condemned to pass the whole period of their existence—the Pole and Russian alike; the former for the rash and ill-fated attempt on the part of his country to free itself from the sway of its powerful ruler, and the latter from the equally futile and absolutely insane attempt at establishing a constitutional form of government in a country nine-tenths of the population of which could not even understand its meaning.

In both instances, as ever occurs under such

circumstances, while the wicked, the profligate, and unprincipled escaped with impunity, the punishment fell upon the noble, the chivalrous, the disinterested alone; and such were these, the most illustrious, the wealthiest, the highest, perhaps, in point of birth and talent in the empire, who, now transferred from their dreary exile, were sent to the distant regions of the Caucasus, to serve in the ranks as private soldiers!

Yet start not, reader, at this seeming cruelty, but observe the sequel. By the Sclavonic laws, one of the very few, perhaps, most rigidly adhered to, an attainted noble, on being sent to serve against the enemy, should he receive the rank of an officer, which, unless his career be cut short by the chance of war, he rarely if ever fails to obtain, he regains all he has lost, privileges, rank, and station, and, if so disposed, quits the profession within a twelvemonth after the receipt of his first commission.

From several of these unfortunate gentlemen I gathered much information regarding the distant and dreary climes in which some

of them had passed a period of from eight to ten years, and in this, as in almost every other opinion I had formed previous to my entrance into the Russian dominions, the ideas that, in common with the rest of the world, I had entertained proved to be equally absurd and erroneous.

The punishment was heavy and severe enough, Heaven knows, but I do not hesitate to say considerably less than that awarded to offences of a similar nature in any other country. They were exiled to that land, or rather wilderness, where, with the exception of some six weeks throughout the year, but one vast prospect ever presents itself to the wearied view, that wide and dreary expanse of snow; but the prisoner is comfortably housed and clothed, provisions are in abundance, and he has the enjoyment of the free air of heaven, no check or control being held over his movements or occupation, while he possesses the most perfect liberty of intercourse with his fellow-exiles.

Such was the picture portrayed to me by

one, a Pole, who, pointing at the time to a volume of the History of the Imprisonment of Sylvio Pellico, by himself, said, "*We* had nothing like that." And, indeed, what unprejudiced reader can peruse that soul-moving narrative, so replete with pathos and feeling, so expressive of the kindly, good, and elevated character of the writer, without experiencing a mixture of sorrow and indignation at the refined and cold-blooded cruelty exemplified in his rigorous confinement, to which death itself would have been mercy in comparison. In which punishment, it may be asked, lay the greater tyranny?

For my own part, when I reflect upon the events which, now nearly a century ago, drove my own family into exile, to serve in the ranks of foreign armies, from their devotion to those they esteemed their native princes — when I recall the confiscations and butcheries that marked that unhappy period, in which blood reeked upon the scaffold from one extremity of the kingdom to another, the military and legal authorities vieing with each other in

their work of slaughter,[1] coupled with the burning of peaceful hamlets, and the massacre in cold blood of the unresisting peasantry, I cannot help reflecting that a little more Russian barbarity and a much less degree of English civilization at the time in question would have been productive of all that was required, without leaving that blood-stained record, which the lapse of ages will never erase from the page of our national history!

But to resume. Among the noblest of that exiled throng, and one whose presence everywhere created that deep feeling of respect which virtue and integrity, clouded by misfortune, everywhere inspires, was the celebrated and once beautiful Madame N——. As her history, though generally known throughout Europe at the time when the interesting circumstances connected with it occurred, has perhaps since faded from memory, and its

[1] "We hang or shoot every one that is known to favour the Pretender, burn their houses, and take away their cattle, of which we got a thousand head within these few days past!!"—Journal of an Officer serving in the Royal Army, dated Fort Augustus, 1746.

happy sequel, reflecting so much lustre on the young Grand Duke Alexander, the Czarevitch of the empire, has never transpired, a relation of the entire narrative throughout may not prove wholly uninteresting.

Among the leading members of those secret societies which existed throughout the empire, during the latter period of the reign of the Emperor Alexander, and the one whose influence was the most unbounded, from the high respect paid to his character by all parties, even by the reckless and unprincipled adventurer, as well as the high-minded but mistaken visionary, was Colonel N——, of the regiment of Moscow grenadiers, of the Imperial Guard.

On the breaking out of the ill-fated insurrection at the accession of the present sovereign, this corps was the first that manifested an insubordinate spirit, and appeared in arms, and whose example instigated and encouraged the others. On its suppression, with other ringleaders, Colonel N—— was brought to trial, and condemned; but his family and station, his rank and standing, but, above all,

his high personal character for honour and integrity, as well as every order of moral worth and merit, together with the interest made in all quarters in his behalf, eventually obtained him the clemency of the Emperor, and the sentence was commuted into banishment to Siberia for life.

He had been married, but a few short years previous, to a lady to whom he was passionately attached, and who threw herself at the feet of the Czar, and earnestly implored permission to abandon fortune, relatives, luxury, and all that rank and wealth could command, to proceed with her husband, and share his destiny in the desolate region where he was to pass the remainder of his days.

Her prayer was granted; and, in spite of the remonstrances of her family, and her husband himself, in disregard of her own failing health and spirits, which gradually sunk under the severity of the climate, there she remained for a period of nine years.

It was during the tour of the Grand Duke Heritier through this part of Russia, which, by the command of his father, had been in-

cluded in the route to be traversed in his journey through the empire, that, among other histories, this affecting narrative was related to him. He took but little apparent notice of it at the time, but afterwards, privately calling a confidential courier, despatched him to Saint Petersburg, with an earnest and eloquent supplication to the Emperor for the pardon of Colonel N——, with the further intimation that he should not move from where he was till the desired boon was obtained.

This communication was entrusted to the feld-jäger, with instructions to deliver it into the Emperor's own hands, and himself bring back the reply, when a munificent reward should repay his zeal and exertions; above all, in the event of the Czar's absence, he was not to lose sight of the packet, but to follow him wherever he might be, and keep the Prince informed of his movements.

The man departed, and, proceeding to St. Petersburg, found the Emperor had quitted for Berlin. Notifying this circumstance to the Grand Duke, he followed him to that

capital, and the same day of his arrival delivered the despatch into the hands of the autocrat.

In the mean time, the young Czarevitch, without breathing a syllable of his intentions to any one, found various reasons for prolonging his stay in the neighbourhood. He had calculated the period of the return of his messenger, and on the morning in question rode forth to meet him.

Within a few miles of the place he encountered the courier, the horses of his sledge covered with foam, the result of the furious rate with which he had driven. The Duke snatched the packet from the hands of the wayworn traveller, who could scarcely rise in his seat from fatigue, as he tendered it, and, breaking open the seal, found it contained, with a few lines from his father of commendation upon himself, the pardon of Colonel N——, with directions for his immediately joining one of the regiments in the Caucasus.

Setting spurs to his horse, the noble-minded young prince rode off at once to the cottage of the exiles, and, alighting at the door, found

Madame N—— alone. A few words sufficed to explain his joyful errand, and, pressing the paper in her hand, he was gone before the wondering and half-doubting lady could find utterance to express the deep and heartfelt gratitude which overpowered all her attempts to falter forth her acknowledgments.

That was a happy, a joyful night; and though many a blessing, both before and since, has followed the course of the young Czarevitch, of whose amiability and generosity of disposition there exists but one opinion throughout the entire empire, it may be questioned if in sincerity or depth of feeling they exceeded, if indeed they equalled, those which then were, and ever since have been, daily implored from Heaven on his head, by the grateful inmates of that Siberian dwelling.

Another of these unfortunate noblemen was the Polish Prince de S——, many years ago so well known in the fashionable coteries of London and Paris. He had, altogether, passed a considerable period in England, having devoted much time to the observation of our method of agriculture; a subject possessing

considerable interest to one like himself, the greater part of whose vast wealth was drawn from territorial sources. This circumstance, with an ardent love of field-sports, brought us much, I may say almost continually, together.

My first visit to him was rather curious; and as it led to the recital of an episode of an equally singular and affecting nature in the history of man's best friend, the noblest and most attached animal in the creation, the dog, I may here relate it.

It was towards dusk in the evening that I was first introduced to him by my friend L——i, when returning from a shooting excursion, and, after a short conversation, he requested the favour of my calling upon him the following morning. At the appointed hour I repaired to his quarters, and, giving my name to the servant, was requested to walk in. On entering the apartment, I was struck with the comfort, I may say the elegance, it displayed, a circumstance I could scarcely have looked for in that remote region, and which I had not yet found in any

other residence, however expressly prepared for the occupation, during the season, of the wealthy and noble.

Mixed with guns, fishing-rods, and other sporting implements, lay choice folios of prints and drawings, together with some select and richly-bound volumes, chiefly of French and English authors. I was about placing my hand upon one of the latter, when a low, deep, and sonorous growl called my attention to another object in the apartment I had not previously noticed. Reclining on a Persian ottoman, at one extremity of the room, lay an enormous dog; such a noble fellow! He was of the pointer breed, though of a size I had never previously beheld, showing a breadth of chest and muscle of limb sufficient to have rendered him a match single-handed for a wolf, while a casual yawn revealed a set of teeth, the very sight of which alone was enough to cause a shiver of apprehension in the beholder, the more especially when a glance served to show this formidable garniture was set in jaws that in

size and strength would have rivalled those of a young lion.

I never withdrew my eyes from him for an instant; in the first place, because it was impossible to view him without admiration; and secondly, and if the truth must be told, by far the more powerful reason, from his seeming exceedingly inclined to lay hold of me, since there he lay, eyeing me askance, in apparent contemplation as to what part of my person he could best find the finest possible mouthful.

Again my hand moved towards the table, and again it was withheld by a similar admonition. I whistled confidently towards him, but had much better have remained quiet, since he evidently viewed my siffling effusion as an attempt to bribe him from his duty; and half rising from his recumbent position, he fixed his large dark eyes upon me in so determined a manner, that I already half felt myself within his unseemly scrunch; but he contented himself with merely giving a significant glance towards my throat, as a hint of what his intentions were.

Fortunately at this moment, the master of the house entered the apartment, when the nature of the animal appeared at once altogether changed, as he sprang towards him, whining, fawning, and gambolling about him like a poodle. I mentioned to the Prince his very inhospitable reception of myself, when he laughingly observed, that he must then introduce us to each other; and accordingly calling the dog, he spoke to him in French, when up went his huge paw, thrust into mine, and placing his formidable head in my lap, he glanced a look upwards in my face, of mingled sagacity and pleasure.

"You will now be the best friends in the world," said my host; and then shortly afterwards added, with considerable emotion, "That animal's history is almost as eventful as my own; when all the world forsook the fallen noble, the degraded gentleman, and the forlorn exile, the dog alone remained faithful, each new misfortune serving but to rivet the more firmly the noble creature's attachment."

He had, he informed me, been bred by

himself; and at the period of the rising in Poland, when not a twelvemonth old, had accompanied him through all the bloody and desperate campaigns of that eventful period, never for an instant being absent from his side. When taken prisoner, (which unfortunate event took place some months before the last final and fatal struggle at Warsaw), and manacled and loaded with heavy irons, he was marched five thousand miles on foot from the frontiers of his own loved land, to the dreary wastes of Siberia, the dog still adhered to his side; nor could all the threats, blows, and curses of the soldiery, escorting their unhappy prisoner, drive him away. At length, the attachment displayed by the animal struck even upon their callous and insensate natures, and he was permitted to remain.

In his period of exile, again the dog was his best companion, as well, indeed, as his faithful guardian, scaring away the wolves from their habitation by his strength and courage, and, by his exertions in search of game, purveying for his master's table. On the remission of his sentence, and being sent

to the Caucasus, his trusty follower of course still came with him, and eminently useful he proved himself, not merely to the Prince, but to any party or detachment with which he was serving, since, in outpost duties, he was worth the whole; and it was hopeless for the mountaineers to attempt a surprise upon any fortress, where the dog formed part of the garrison.

Such was the singular narrative relating to this noble animal, as communicated to me by his master, and which of course could not fail in rendering him an object of more than ordinary interest.

The period of a fortnight having now elapsed since the alarm had been heard of any hostile movements in our neighbourhood, the Prince de S——, my friend L——i, and myself, determined upon paying a long contemplated visit to the Count de S——h, the Hetman, commanding the Cossacks of the Line to the westward, a chivalrous and noble soldier, beloved, I may say adored, by the daring spirits he commanded, and who, in former days, would have formed a model for

the feudal chieftain of the Rhine, or our own border frontier.

Our journey lay through a country, one of the richest of nature's gardens, but which we found very few occasions to admire, since our nervous proximity to the line of operations afforded us but brief time to halt; and the report of our fowling-pieces, as we cracked at any stray pheasant or partridge that crossed our path, was almost as quickly followed by the glistening of spears, and a rush to the spot of half-a-dozen vigilant Liners, in whose territories we now were, and who, ever on the alert, (how different to my round and thick-headed friends of Northern Russia!) never allowed a shot to be fired without ascertaining the reason.

The evening of the third day brought us to our point of destination. It was beautifully situated, and, though of large size, as forming the head-quarters of the Hetman, did not differ in any respect from other villages of a similar description, the houses of which are for the most part built of wood, both commodious and comfortable, and ranged in line

with the most punctilious degree of military precision. The streets are wide, clean, and extremely well kept, while in the centre is a large open space, on which stands the church, remarkable at once both for beauty and simplicity, and built in the old Russo-Chinese style, surrounding which, again, are several other buildings, consisting of a gun-shed, containing six light field-pieces, with their limbers and other matériel, a powder-magazine, and a range of others of a smaller kind, constituting warehouses for military stores of every description.

After a hearty and cordial welcome from our gallant host, he conducted us to our different billets, as his own residence differing but little in point of size from those around him, he would have found it difficult to have accommodated the whole of us under his own immediate roof.

Mine was a lodging of which I shall ever retain a lasting remembrance. It was a long, low building, separated by a passage leading from the entrance into two compartments; the one to the right, being that appropriated

to myself, consisted of a sitting and bed-room, exhibiting the very beau-ideal of cleanliness and comfort; the walls and floor, as well as the chairs and tables, were scrubbed and scoured to a polish, that rivalled that of the deck of a man-of-war; while in the latter apartment stood a bed, with a mattress stuffed, I was led to believe, from the delicious odour that proceeded from it, with hay and wild thyme. A rough painted lithograph of the Virgin, and a large Russian bible, with earthen jugs filled with the choicest flowers, formed the only ornaments in both.

The other side of the dwelling was occupied by a large kitchen (every appurtenance to which was arranged with equal order and precision, the various cooking-utensils shining like mirrors), and two smaller apartments, now occupied by my host and his family.

The former was a fine, large, athletic figure, with a long, flowing, white beard, upwards of seventy years of age, as he himself informed me; but his form was unbent by time; and many a younger and apparently more vigorous champion would have paused

ere he selected him, even now, as an antagonist in the rough sports of the country. He was a man of wealth and substance, possessing several brood mares (for each of which he could have obtained at any time from £100 to £150 sterling), and other cattle in abundance, and, on the whole, formed an admirable representative of what we should have termed in England an opulent and substantial yeoman.

I have been minute in this description, not merely as applying to the individual in question, but as characteristic of this wild but gallant race, of whom so little is known in Europe, and whose opulence,[1] freedom, and bold, enterprising spirit constitutes them in every respect the very reverse of the Russian serf or peasant.

My host's family consisted of his aged partner, two sons, at that period absent on duty at the head-quarters of the commander-

[1] At the grand cavalry review at Vosnosensk, in 1836, several of the privates were offered as far as £200 sterling for the horses which they rode, by the foreign officers present.

in-chief, General Grabbé, and a young granddaughter, a sweet little cherub, between twelve and fourteen years of age.

In this delightful region we remained for upwards of a week, in the enjoyment of every description of field-sport, hawking, hunting, and shooting, in which, of course, the neighbourhood abounded; and only prepared for our return to Piatigorsk, in anticipation of the arrival of the Governor-general, who, having made a tour of the posts on the Black Sea, was now making a similar excursion among those in the interior.

It was the day previous to our intended departure; the gray dawn of morning was just visible above the horizon; our horses, ready bridled and saddled, were being led up and down in readiness for our last final excursion, preparatory to taking leave of our hospitable host; and, having finished our coffee, we were inhaling the rich perfume of the choicest Persian tobacco from our chibouques, when it struck me a low, deadened sound boomed in the distance.

I listened;—all around was calm, still, and

serene; and, save the voices of our followers, and impatient tramping of the horses, not a sound was to be heard.

I imagined I must be mistaken, but shortly afterwards proceeded down to the gate, forming the entrance to the small garden which surrounded the habitation, and there again the sound rung upon my ear, and this time with a distinctness not to be mistaken, since it was rapidly repeated at different intervals.

I lost no time in hurrying back and relating the circumstance, when the whole party accompanied me to the spot. Two or three of the Cossacks and myself were down on the instant; but had scarcely placed our ears upon the ground before one of the former sprang up, giving exclamation to something in Russian, the purport of which, however, his commander seemed to disbelieve, as he smiled and shook his head incredulously. But the sounds now increased in strength, and parted in much quicker succession, till at length the dullest and heaviest amongst us could no longer remain in ignorance that it was the sound of cannon in active and vigo-

rous play, and that some sharp work was then going forward at no great distance.

In an instant all was bustle and preparation; we hurried back, all idea of our intended pastime turned into thoughts of sporting of a very different description. The shrill blast of the trumpet soon roused the troopers from their slumbers; and, in an incredibly short space of time, the warriors of the Line, each leading his charger by the bridle, were at their different posts, the guns drawn out, shotted, and dragged into position, while parties of three and four dashed out to reconnoitre, and scour the surrounding country; and a column, composed of as many men as could be spared, were hastily formed up and despatched on the spur in the direction of what was conjectured to be the scene of action.

"Every thing," says the Mussulman of all sects and denominations, "is kismet (destiny), and man, whatever are his inclinations, must bow to Fate—such is the will of Alla." At this moment I was half disposed to believe the same. My respected friend, M. Rodofinikin, in his last injunctions to me on part-

ing, most particularly cautioned me to avoid (what he declared to be the penchant of all Englishmen) any disposition towards being concerned in the brawls and skirmishes so continually occurring in the Caucasus; since, in addition to the prospect of being shot or sabred, according to the ordinary chances of war, alternatives which no *sensible* person (a satirical emphasis on the word sensible) would run the risk of occurring, such a proceeding was likely to be productive of other consequences of a serious nature to myself personally, as being found on the one side might expose me to the suspicion of the Russian government; and if, on the other, by misrepresentation of the circumstances, to the animadversion of my own. I promised implicit obedience to his instructions, but who can contend against fate? Here was I a second time, perforce as it were, on the eve of taking a belligerent part in an affair with which I had no concern whatever.

I kept my attention vigilantly fixed in the direction from whence the sounds proceeded, and became suddenly aware that the conflict

must have assumed a new character. All at once, the horizon in that quarter became illumined with a blood-red, crimson glare; it could not be the rising sun, being yet much too early, and besides it was not in the eastward; further yet it extended its meteor-like influence, and now became mingled with a deeper, more sombre, and duskier hue. I saw the character of the whole at a glance; the assailants had the better, and, having carried the post, had, according to their usual wont, set fire to and abandoned it.

Gradually and slowly the heavens cleared, blithely and cheerily the sun shed forth its glorious rays, gladdening the bright and smiling scene around, shining too, we also felt convinced, in glowing majesty upon a scene of a wholly different character, not far distant, where many a bold and gallant form, who, the morning previous, had beheld it rise, (how little dreaming it were for the last time!) and but a few short hours previous replete with life, energy, and spirit, now lay stark and stiff, the cheering rays of summer

and the dreary snows of winter alike unfelt and disregarded.

Nervously and anxiously we waited for intelligence, of which we were not long detained in ignorance; gradually our scouting parties returned, escorting the few (few, indeed!) survivors, most of them severely wounded, who had escaped from the scene of the recent conflict, and from whom we gathered an account of the whole.

It appeared they belonged to a force stationed in one of the newly-constructed fortresses, about eighteen or twenty versts distant, and which consisted of three companies of infantry, a small party of Cossacks of the Don, with a detachment of artillery. They had been less exposed than other outposts to the harassing attacks of the mountaineers, and this, though it did not slacken any vigilance on the part of the garrison in guarding against a surprise, rendered them less careful in scrutinizing small parties of Circassians, who, professing themselves as belonging either to a neutral or friendly tribe,

were in the habit of being allowed a free passage both to and from the fortress, for the purpose of trafficing with the soldiery.

It was the evening previous to the assault that a small party remained a much longer period than usual, during which time every minutiæ belonging to the fortification must have been carefully and diligently noticed.

With the first tinge of dawn the next morning, the assault was given; and while one party of the assailants remained mounted within the forest glades, which surrounded the outpost, to cover the retreat of their companions in the event of pursuit, or repel any advance to succour the garrison, the rest rushed forward with their usual impetuosity. Severe and heavy was the loss they sustained by the cross fire from the guns and musketry as they advanced; but prepared for this contingency, and knowing their only chance of success lay in closing with their disciplined and formidable enemy, in no way dismayed or checked in their onward rush, they crossed the open space intervening between the cover where they had lain and the fortress; the ramparts

were scaled with the rapidity of lightning, and then commenced a short and murderous but decisive struggle.

But once within the walls, and its issue was not for one single instant doubtful; the heavy and inert Russian soldier being no match for the agile and light-limbed mountaineer. The garrison fought nobly and gallantly; the sabre and bayonet clashed fearfully together; and the narrow precincts of the fortress became converted into a regular seething-pool of human gore; while the horror of the scene became considerably heightened by the explosion of a detached part of the powder-magazine, by which upwards of fifty of the soldiery and several of the assailants were hurled into the air.

Far above the tumult and shouts of the conflict rose the voice of the Circassian leader, who, by his action and example, led on and encouraged his followers, and whose desperate energy and murderous skill, as he dealt destruction everywhere around, pointed him out as the presiding genius of this scene of carnage.

The work of death proceeded with frightful

rapidity; but, in the space of an hour from the commencement of the assault, scarcely a Russian was left alive—a few only, and those for the most part severely wounded, escaping to the woods.

I put several questions to one or two of the survivors of this ugly affair, regarding the assailants and their leader; the latter of whom I perceived to be well known, both by description and reputation, to all around. He was described as a young man, whose skill and knowledge as a partisan warrior were unrivalled, and one whose strength and prowess as a soldier could only be equalled by his fierce, unrelenting energy and cruelty of disposition—and, altogether, one of those to whom might be well applied the motto of "Swift to smite and never to spare." Some further particulars which I learned served but to corroborate a suspicion which had previously flashed across me, as I thought, "My Friend of the Mountain, this is your handiwork!"

Two days afterwards, accompanied by a picked escort, we returned to Piatigorsk,

where, the following morning, the Governor-general arrived with his suite, and I had once more the pleasure of seeing many of my old Teflis friends.

The evening of the viceroy's arrival was marked by a brilliant fête, given by himself to all the society assembled at the Wells, to which the various chieftains of the neighbouring tribes, both Tartar and Circassian, were invited, and whose appearance lent a character to the ball-room at once unique and striking. Of the latter, many, I was informed by their countrymen, were, for the first time in their lives, on this occasion introduced into European society; and yet there they were, with their fine, erect, martial figures, and rich costumes, moving with a calm dignity of manner, and polished gentlemanly demeanour, that would have indicated the whole period of their existence as having hitherto been passed in a court, instead of the wild scenes of their native mountains.

There was one peculiarity about them, which forcibly struck me: in gazing on the scene around them, in the particularly graceful and

half-negligent attitude that marked their usual bearing, which almost led the spectator to believe it must have been purposely studied—the hand ever rested, as if by the force of habit or instinct, upon the hilt of the sabre and poniard, while the lurking expression of the eye told that the transition from a scene of social festivity and pleasure to one of violence and bloodshed was an event they were by no means wholly unprepared for.

During the evening, I became aware of two remarkable instances, expressive of the devoted attachment held by the mountaineers to the lofty hills and bright valleys of their native land, which neither wealth, power, nor ambition, could ever induce them wholly to forget.

In the dance of the Mazurka, I had noticed, as the most elegant and animated in that graceful movement, a young chieftain, wearing the uniform of the Circassian squadron of the Imperial Guard. He was a scion of the noble house of Gheray, the ancient Khans of the Crimea, whose family estates lying almost on the verge of the Russian frontier, on the

first invasion of the country, were compelled to acknowledge the sway of the Autocrat. With several other members of his family, the young prince was sent to St. Petersburg for the purpose of being educated, and, while there, was treated with the most parental kindness both by the Emperor and Empress.

On leaving the Military College, to enter upon his duties as a subaltern in the squadron of his countrymen recently raised, and attached to the Imperial Guard, he astonished the whole world at the capital by publishing a short, but most beautiful poem, which he had composed during the latter period of his stay there. The subject was one which could well bear transplanting into any language in the world. It spoke of the stately city in which his later years had been passed—of its magnificent and gorgeous palaces—its brilliant fêtes and gay assemblies; he dwelt upon the grand and vast military array which lent such splendour and majesty to the monarch and his throne; and spoke with much grateful feeling and ardent attachment to the Emperor and Empress for their attentive

kindness towards himself; but he reverted to his mountain home—to the rich glens and valleys where his infancy strayed—his field-sports, his high-blooded horses, and the gallant and devoted followers of his house and name; and, in the contrast which followed, his imagination ever wandered from the dazzling pleasures of the one to the light-hearted joys, so early and deeply impressed upon his mind, of the other.

The entire work, several Russians informed me, exhibited a wild character of rich pathos, deep feeling, and passionate attachment, at once singular and affecting.

The second instance was still more extraordinary. While speaking to my friend L——i, I was accosted in French by a mountaineer, who had detached himself from a group of three or four of his countrymen. I looked hard at the speaker, either fancying that my ears had deceived me, or that before me stood a piece of admirably-arranged masquerade. He was a large, powerful man about forty, whose features were certainly

those of the country, and his rich dress of dark-blue, embroidered with silver, with a thick, short, curling, dark-brown beard, as far as externals were concerned, proclaimed his rank and character; but the voice and intonation of accent in the language which he used were of the truest and most perfect Parisian, such as could only be acquired by a long and continued residence in that gay capital.

The keen glance of the chieftain saw at once the feelings of wonder and curiosity which possessed me, and, after a few common-place observations, introduced himself as Omar Bey, a proprietor of some note in the Kabardas.

At the early period of twelve years of age, he left his country, and, proceeding to Egypt, had entered the service of the Pacha, Mehemet Ali; and who, at that time commencing those reforms in his administration and government he has since carried out to such an extent, sent him, with several other youths, to France for the benefit of education. In

that country he remained for upwards of thirteen years, ten of which were passed at the Ecole Polytechnique.

On receiving an order to return to Alexandria, he began to reflect that, having been so long his own master, it would be highly advisable to continue so; and, having an ardent desire to revisit his native land, the which, 'midst all his gaieties and pleasures, he had never lost sight of, he deemed that a return to their rude independence was highly preferable to the varying and capricious favour of an eastern Court. Instead, therefore, of obeying the mandate, he proceeded to Constantinople, and from thence to Circassia, two years after the commencement of the present struggle. He found, on his arrival, his native province occupied by the invaders, but, rejecting the tempting and flattering overtures made to him of taking service with them, he had ever since remained, devoting his time and attention to agriculture, with other pursuits of a similar nature; and, in conjunction with several other chieftains and nobles situated like himself, occasionally me-

diating between his countrymen and their adversaries, and exerting every thing in his power to soften and mitigate the desolating scenes of misery and horror that have, unfortunately, but too often marked the progress of this sanguinary war.

I had reason to esteem myself fortunate in meeting him, since, in the course of the evening, I was enabled to acquire much and varied information, of a very valuable nature, regarding the Caucasus, its customs, laws, religion, and people.

The Governor-General's stay was not prolonged beyond a few days, his presence being required in the south.

It was about a week after his departure that our neighbourhood became particularly troublesome. On all occasions of moving even five versts from the post, it became necessary to act with considerable circumspection, and never to proceed without escort; while, one morning, the town was discovered to be on fire no less than three times in as many different places, and though there was every reason to believe the circumstance

was any thing but accidental, the utmost activity and vigilance on the part of the police failed to discover the least trace of the incendiaries.

Again, another outpost, five-and-thirty versts from the station, had been attacked, and from its wounded commander, who was subsequently brought into Piatigorsk, I gathered an account of the affair.

His detachment consisted of two companies of infantry and four guns — in all 180 men — and were stationed as a guard over a valuable stud and depôt of other cattle. Though the party did not possess any great numerical force, it was very strongly posted; but what imparted to its situation a character of security, was, the circumstance that none of the flying parties of the enemy had for years past been heard of in the neighbourhood; when, therefore, the assault took place, if not taken by surprise, it certainly was wholly unexpected.

The commander, a Pole, a young man of considerable skill and ability in this sort of warfare, having served in the Caucasus for

several years, made a desperate defence—for which the assailants, who had calculated upon the weakness of the force opposed to them rendering them an easy prey, were evidently unprepared; the consequence was, the irritation engendered by the firmness of the besieged lent a character of additional ferocity to the scene.

The young officer who commanded was well aware, from past experience, that, if once his adversaries succeeded in closing with him, the discipline of his men, so far from availing them, was considerably to their disadvantage; his great hope and object, therefore, was to keep the assailants at a distance by the cross fire of his guns and musketry, till such time as reinforcements could reach him from the neighbouring outposts; but the fierce hardihood and indomitable energy of the mountaineers, who were equally aware with himself of the value of time, overcame every obstacle, and, though they suffered a frightful loss from the death-dealing shower which poured in among them, and which, though it staggered, did not repel them, a

quarter of an hour had scarcely elapsed from the commencement of the assault, before the contest was maintained hand to hand; in the midst of which, the fortification was as usual set fire to, and the whole of the cattle carried off by a mounted party who lay in wait for the purpose.

Notwithstanding that the object of the Circassians was thus accomplished, it did not appear to form any part of the plan of their leader to draw off his men; his fierce and sanguinary nature appearing rather to riot in the work of slaughter he had created, and of which, from the predominant figure he displayed by his voice and example in encouraging his followers, as, covered with blood, he swept all before him, he might, without injustice, be well supposed to represent the supreme Moloch.

Worn out and overpowered, the defendants were fast falling—the utter extermination of the whole detachment appearing the object that would alone satisfy their stern and relentless adversary—when the bright glimmering of arms in the distance, glancing upon a

body of cavalry advancing at speed, caused the assailants to betake themselves to their horses, and retreat.

The body of troops, which had thus so opportunely arrived, proved to be a party of Cossacks of the Line, whose fortunate and timely appearance alone preserved the shattered remnant of the garrison from annihilation, and two-thirds of the original number of whom lay killed and wounded, while the entire convoy had been carried off, and everything within the earthen ramparts reduced to ashes.

Exasperated at the spectacle which met their view, the Cossacks scarcely stayed to breathe their horses, but darted off in pursuit. They soon came up with their adversaries, who were retiring swiftly, but in good order, when a sharp running fight ensued, by which both parties sustained some loss, the Circassians still retreating ; till, entering a narrow gorge, when, as the shrill war-cry of the mountaineers issued at once from each side, and burst upon the startled ear of their assailants, the pursued wheeled about, and rushed full

speed upon the Cossacks, who, in the same instant, were vigorously charged from both flanks.

Though taken at disadvantage, and wholly unprepared for the ambuscade into which their impetuosity had led them, the warriors of the Line were too well accustomed to such straits to feel dismayed at circumstances under which perhaps the best and finest regular cavalry in any other part of the world must inevitably have been destroyed. Accordingly, a short but fierce and sanguinary conflict ensued, which terminated in the Cossacks cutting their way through their antagonists, but leaving a score of their companions dead on the field, besides having several others severely wounded.

This narrative left no doubt upon my own mind, in conjunction with other circumstances I learned connected with it, as to who was its author. Its red-handed characters were too clearly manifest in their points of resemblance to be mistaken; and, in its history throughout, was again legibly portrayed my Friend of the Mountain!

My acquaintance with the wounded officer, whom I have mentioned as the commander of the outpost on this disastrous occasion, subsequently led me to a most singular rencontre. He was lodged in a comfortable residence, built like many others for the convenience of the wealthy, who frequent the Wells during the season, and which are generally constructed for the purpose by the free and opulent peasants settled in the neighbourhood, who, during this period, reap no inconsiderable harvest by way of profit in return.

It was one morning after a visit to the invalid, that I was followed to the door by the proprietor of the house, who, to my utter astonishment, accosting me in remarkably good English, asked me if I spoke that language.

I replied in the affirmative.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, "it is a pleasure to me to hear the old sound again! Perhaps you have also been in England; if so, let me know in what part?"

More and more surprised, (I may say,

indeed, bewildered) I mentioned that I at least ought to have been there.

"Yes," he replied, "I thought as much from your speaking so well, which is rather uncommon for a *Frenchman* (!) But," he added, with an all-sufficient and self-satisfied look, "no foreigner can mislead me. I knew you directly."

Though considerably nettled, both by the allusion itself, as well as the patronizing air with which it was uttered, I did not for the minute discover myself, but bestowed a searching glance upon the querist, in the endeavour to solve the to me almost inexplicable riddle he himself presented in his own person; but beneath the rough grey coat, and general exterior, announcing an opulent free Russian peasant, I could discover nothing, save that the round, hale, and vermilion countenance, shaded by locks of the most snowy whiteness, betokening at least a period of life of upwards of seventy years, presented an appearance, which, under any other circumstances, I should have conceived represented the beau ideal of a bluff and

burly English yeoman. Still, however, though his accent was perfectly that of a native born, there was an imperfection in his mode of speaking, which convinced me either that he was a foreigner, or that, if an Englishman, his own language had faded from memory from a long course of disuse.

As my curiosity was now, however, roused to the highest pitch, and it appeared that my avowing myself would, in all probability, obtain a solution of this very singular enigma, I at once mentioned my name and country,—an intimation which, at first, received with a stare of astonishment, was followed by an incredulous shake of the head. When, however, convinced of my identity, though somewhat mortified with the blow his vanity had received in his penetration, on which he so much prided himself, being thus so completely thrown out, his delight knew no bounds.

His life had been a singular one. When a boy, he had embarked before the mast on board a Russian trading-vessel, which, with the greater part of the crew, was lost off the English coast. Having subsequently engaged

himself in a British trader, he was shortly afterwards pressed for the Navy, in which he served for a period of nine years, being present in the actions of the Nile, Copenhagen, and Trafalgar, under the immortal Nelson.

Shortly after the latter glorious event, he found means to return to his own country, and, having served as a *bas-officier* both in the Russian Army and Navy, had been one of the colonists planted in the South, where he had become a proprietor of horses and other cattle to a considerable extent.

From the time of our first meeting, scarcely a day now passed without my seeing him. The good old gentleman had some peculiarities which afforded considerable mirth to my gay and laughter-loving companions. His usual themes of conversation (indeed, I may say, his only ones, for I never discovered his going beyond these two) were Nelson and the British navy. Of the former, he used to speak with a degree of reverence and devotion more resembling the worship paid at the shrine of some favoured saint, than the homage proffered to an object of earthly

mould, however idolized or esteemed, and regarding the latter, speak of what you would in terms of praise, and no matter how irrelevant to the subject, our friend was ever captiously on the alert to offer some disparaging remark, there being evidently in his estimation but two orthodox objects of admiration, all others being unworthy of mention in comparison.

Thus, for instance, if the discipline of a regiment, the beauty of a country, or the architecture of a building, were reverted to in terms of praise in his presence, he was sure to esteem it as deteriorating from the just tribute due to his favoured idols, and it never failed to elicit from him sundry observations of a very depreciating and invidious nature in reference to what was alluded to.

There were also several eccentricities in his character peculiar to a tar of the old school, among which, and certainly the most prominent, was an utter dislike to all soldiers and Frenchmen; the latter of whom, in particular, he especially regarded with a most

decided degree of aversion. And when he was drunk—which event generally occurred on an average once within the four-and-twenty hours—both of the said parties were anathematized with an acrimony that produced the most uproarious laughter among his hearers; although, from his discourse being delivered in English—which, when in this state, from early habit or some other reason, was the only language he either could or would speak—his allusions were not altogether thoroughly understood, save by L——i and myself.

Then his narratives were of a particularly wonderful nature, bordering, indeed, in many instances, upon the marvellous; and at times the period selected for their recital was somewhat ill-chosen—as, for instance, one morning, when having imbibed a draught of a deeper nature than usual, in commemoration of some event or other, the origin of which I had every reason to suspect existed solely in the visionary imagination of our friend himself, his narrative became so exceedingly prolix, and delivered in terms so difficult to be understood, that L——i, who was

preparing some letters for St. Petersburg, out of all patience, at last told him to "Go to h—ll!"

"That's not a gentleman's language," said the offended speaker, tartly, and endeavouring to steady himself into an attitude of wounded dignity: "That's not a gentleman's language," he repeated, "but that of—ahem!" and, facing about, he marched out of the room with an air of injured innocence, emblematic of a person whose gratuitous efforts at imparting information had met with so ungrateful a return.

It was now towards the close of September. Many of the visitors to the Wells had taken their departure. Several members of our own immediate circle had also quitted, either to join their regiments at St. Petersburg,[1] or those in which they were at present serving as volunteers against the mountaineers. A few days more would see the whole society entirely dispersed; and it was resolved that

[1] The whole of the Imperial Guard are quartered either in the capital or its environs.

our last assembly should be a pic-nic to a spot of a singularly curious nature.

Within a few versts of the Sour Waters at Kislavosk is a small range of rocks, the highest of which is known by the name of Kaltzo, or Ring, so termed from the part towards its summit being a large circular opening, so very minutely described, that it is scarcely possible to believe it is altogether the work of nature, and through which a superb panorama is afforded of the surrounding country.

On the morning of the 21st we set off, accompanied by a strong escort, and, after an agreeable ride, reached the spot. We found plenty of occupation for our guns in the neighbourhood without moving far from our ground, which, under present circumstances, would not have been very prudent, and this prevented my climbing the ascent till towards the evening.

On reaching the top, a scene burst upon the sight similar to the effect produced by a *coup de théâtre*. Standing in the ring, a view was presented to the beholder at once the most extensive and varied, and exhibiting

a prospect of richness and fertility that could not have been surpassed.

I was alone; for my companions, tired with their day's excursion, and to whom the novelty was lost, from having repeatedly been here before, had remained below. The beauty of the picture was considerably enhanced by the setting sun, which shed a flood of crimson light upon the distant horizon.

Lost in admiration, I did not for some time observe that I was myself an object of curiosity to a figure, who, standing on a ledge of rock a little below the ring, had approached me unperceived. When, however, my attention was directed towards him, I at first imagined he must be one of the Cossacks of our own party. A second glance, however, convinced me that my conjecture was erroneous. He was an old man, with a flowing beard, as white as snow, armed to the teeth with sabre, pistol, and dagger, and was evidently one who could yet back his horse, or strike a blow even with the boldest and strongest; and when, in answer to an observation I addressed him, he sprang up to

where I myself stood, it was with a lightness and activity that showed his figure unimpaired as well as unbent by time.

"How beautiful is this scene!" I exclaimed in Turkish, as he joined me, by way of saying something.

The old man regarded me fixedly as he said—

"You are not of this country?"

I answered that I was not, but an Englishman.

"So I thought," he replied. "And you are the officer of whom I have heard as having been for some time resident about here? Ay! gaze forth upon the scene before you!—nearly eighty years have passed over my head, and I remember it once very different to what it is now. In the space before you once dwelt, in happiness and liberty, twenty thousand families; but the Muscovite came with his cannon and walls of steel—which avail him here, though in the mountains it renders him powerless—and where are they now? Lost, and gone! All around is desolate and silent! —and at such a cost alone will these hills

ever be obtained. Stranger! we have heard much, and often, of your nation and its people, as of those whose generous nature is ever ready to sympathise with and succour the distressed, to whom our cause is not wholly unknown, and who are aware of our struggle for all in life most dear with our mighty and all-powerful enemy. But though our Sultan —our natural liege-lord, the head of our faith—has delivered us over at the footstool of the oppressor, and the princes of Europe look with indifference on a brave people contending for their homes and families, many—ay, many yet will be the columns of the Autocrat whose ranks will be shattered, and the bones of whose soldiery will whiten these hills, before its sons are finally overwhelmed and subdued. Stranger, farewell! Remember what I have said; and sometimes let your thoughts revert with kindness to the mountains of the Caucasus."

He disappeared as he spoke; and, ruminating upon, as well as affected by, what I had heard, I rejoined my party.

The period of my departure from these in-

teresting regions had now arrived. One of my companions, an aide-de-camp of Prince Menzikoff, the Minister of Marine, a lieutenant of the naval division of the guard,[1] and myself, had arranged for our travelling together, and the morning of our leaving had been fixed, when an event, as unexpected as disagreeable, postponed our intended resolution, and which consisted in a village of Cossacks of the Line, lying almost in our direct route, and actually within thirty versts of Stavrapol, the head-quarters of the commander-in-chief on the Kouban, having been carried by assault by the same party of mountaineers who had already caused so much mischief in our own immediate neighbourhood.

The leader of this band appeared almost gifted with omnipresence, since no sooner did we hear of him in one place—where, like the destroying angel, his path was ever marked by flame, slaughter, and devastation—than,

[1] To the Imperial Guard is attached a division of sailors termed the "Equipage de la Garde."

before even the sensation caused by the event had subsided, we heard of his appearance in a wholly different quarter, ever successful in his blighting course.

On the present occasion, a flag of truce had been sent to the handful of men remaining in the village for its protection, summoning its immediate surrender, when the lives of all should be spared; but threatening, in the event of a refusal, that the whole should be put to the sword. The cartel was not received, and fearfully the Circassian chieftain kept his word, since, on the place being carried by storm, every male living being within its lines was mercilessly slaughtered.

"My Friend of the Mountain!" I again thought. "If, indeed, I am right in my conjecture, and this also emanates from you, Heaven save me the honour of your further acquaintance!"

This melancholy event retarded our departure a few days later than we originally intended, as we did not deem it prudent to pursue our route till some intimation had

been received of the neighbourhood being clear of these hostile visitants.

I have mentioned that the entire range of the Caucasus, with its adjacent provinces, are known to the neighbouring countries under the heads of two grand divisions only, but, for the more thorough comprehension of the reader, relative to the *locale* of the theatre of war, a somewhat minuter detail must be offered of that part to the westward, known under the denomination of Cherkesse, which may again be divided into four different and distinct divisions.

The first of these, the wildest and most remote, and the inhabitants of which are the fiercest and most intractable, is that of the province of Abazak, on which the Russian arms, whether from the strength of its position, or the rare collision of the hostile forces, (the invaders having too much nearer at hand to occupy their attention at present,) have made but little or no impression since the commencement of the contest. The second is that formed of the three large districts of Abaza, Natukgoitch, and Shapshook, which

comprise the whole of the sea-coast from Soochoum-Kalè to Anapa, and extend inland as far as the Kouban. The third is that of the plains situated between the Kouban and Laba rivers, composed of the provinces of Zadooz, Gurghenai, Magoish, Adhugor, and Hamedgoee: and the fourth, and last division, the largest and the richest, but the least able to offer resistance, is that comprehended in the fertile fields, unrivalled pastures, and picturesque valleys, lying between the Kouban and the Terek, and known under the general term of the Great and Little Kabardas.

Of these, the two first may be said to be ever in a state of constant, deadly, and never-ending hostility with the invading forces. Of the two others, the situation of the former is a most unfortunate one. Open on every side to the Russian armies, and wholly destitute of the strong mountain defiles which afford such impregnability to the belligerent provinces, they have been compelled to remain neutral in a contest in which every feeling must naturally be enlisted on the side of their compatriots, hostages being given to the Im-

perial Commanders as a guarantee for their fidelity, and a free passage on all occasions accorded for the Muscovite armies.

This is, however, unfortunately, not the worst of the calamity, since it has been a line of conduct which has exposed them to the incursions of their countrymen, who, in the blindness of their fury, either could not or would not discriminate between willing obedience, and that which stern necessity alone had rendered compulsory, and which even then had not been adopted till the result of several years of obstinate and sanguinary conflict had taught them the utter hopelessness of resistance. The consequence was, that, open to aggression on every side, they have at times been compelled to join the Russian forces, to whom, in addition to serving as guides through the country, they have proved invaluable auxiliaries, from their aptitude and skill in guerilla warfare.

This very quickly taught the mountaineers the nature of the error into which they had fallen, and latterly, with the exception of an occasional desultory inroad, partaking, how-

ever, I am led to believe, more of the nature of an individual feud than a national quarrel, this hostility has ceased on both sides, and much information regarding the movements of the invaders is transmitted by the inhabitants of these districts to the belligerent provinces.

Of the fourth and last division, the Kabardas, it may be said its inhabitants are completely subdued (as far as such a country can be) to the Muscovite rule; for, though retaining their arms, and governed by their own princes and nobles, Russian outposts and garrisons overspread their country, Russian and German colonies occupy some of the richest portions of their soil, and hostages from every family of consideration have been surrendered to the Imperial Government. It is from these provinces are recruited that fine band of men, forming the Circassian Guard of the Empress at St. Petersburg.

What the united military force of the Western Caucasus would be it is difficult to say. From all that I could learn, the Kabardas alone, at the commencement of the

war, could turn out 20,000 men, admirably equipped and mounted, and forming a body of light cavalry it would be difficult to match throughout the world. The neutral provinces between the Kouban and Laba rivers might also furnish a similar number, and the belligerent districts, on a rough computation, between 60,000 and 70,000 more—which, though not of the brilliant order of the chivalry of the plains, possess an equal, if not superior, degree of hardihood, spirit, and resolution—the whole, I should say, forming an aggregate force, varying from 120,000 to 130,000 men, exclusive of an additional number of about 12,000 or 15,000 tooffunchees, or foot-soldiers, scattered though the various provinces, but who are seldom brought into play except in ambuscades, and conflicts in the more mountainous regions, on the Russians forcing their way from the interior to the sea-coast.

This formidable armament, could it ever have been united under one head, and wielded with sagacity, talent, and discrimination, coupled with the difficulties and strength of the

country, would have presented a barrier to Northern ambition wholly insurmountable; but, owing to existing differences among themselves, in many points relative to their laws and customs, with their intestine feuds and dissensions, Russia has been enabled to subdue them in detail. Thus, while the war raged in the Kabardas, the other provinces gazed listlessly on; and when transferred to the Kouban and Laba districts, the mountain regions stood aloof. Deeply and bitterly have they since regretted this selfish and fatal error; and at the present period, as I have been informed by some distinguished Russian officers themselves, in the day of their adversity, the Circassians are exhibiting a union of strength, conjoined with a sagacity and skill in their mode of warfare, which, blended with the determined and obstinate courage they have ever manifested, at the commencement of the contest, would have rendered futile all attempts at their subjugation!

It is the feeling caused by this sad and dear-bought experience which has induced their chiefs and rulers to prohibit, under the

pains of confiscation of property, and the parties so offending, themselves and families, being sold into slavery,[1] all intercourse whatever with the invading forces, having experienced the mischief derived from the system.

I have previously mentioned the passion of the mountaineers for music and dancing, which often led them to frequent the Wells during the festivities of the season; there was yet another mode of communication, productive of consequences still more advantageous to the Russian interests, which consisted in commercial relations being opened to a considerable extent on the coast with the belligerents, and the trade of which, consisting of salt, chintzes, and other articles required by the Circassians, brought a host of Muscovite

[1] This is the highest and severest degree of punishment ever inflicted by a Circassian tribunal, which is generally composed of the oldest and most renowned warriors, directed by the Ulema, or priesthood, of the tribe to which the offender belongs. To this, of course, must be excepted cases of wilful and deliberate murder, (rarely, however, if ever, heard of,) when the usual doctrine of "blood for blood" awards the life of the homicide, unless he can compound with the family and relatives of the deceased.

spies and adherents into the heart of their country, the effects of which were very quickly felt; and, though the mountaineers subsequently suffered severe deprivations by its discontinuance, it was by general consent suppressed, and the port of Anapa, which formed the grand seat of this commerce, jealously and vigilantly beleaguered to enforce its prohibition.

As it was found hopeless to re-establish these relations again on the coast, the Russian government, who were fully alive to how much their interests had been advanced by them, attempted the establishment of several depôts for a similar proceeding on the Kouban, but to very little purpose: in fact, their doing so was in the abstract productive of injury to themselves, since the only persons that resorted to them were the inhabitants of the neutral provinces, who purchased the merchandize exposed for the sole purpose of eventually transmitting it to their countrymen in the mountains.

This discontinuance of the trade on the coast has been a severe check to the Russians,

who calculated, naturally enough, that, could they succeed in preventing its being carried on with any other nation, it would eventually place the mountaineers in a state of complete dependence upon themselves for even some of the most urgent necessaries of life, such as salt, &c., under the deprivation of which, the most prejudiced mind must accord its admiration to the Circassians, for their determined and inflexible adherence to a line of policy, which, productive of so much public good, at the same time entails so much individual misery.

When the war first commenced, Russia, whose experience of Asiatic campaigning had hitherto taught her to disregard and despise all whom she had till then previously encountered in the field, imagined that little or no resistance was to be anticipated from a comparatively isolated band of mountaineers, and therefore conceived that the Tchernamorsky Cossacks (Cossacks of the Black Sea) on the one side, and those of the Line on the other, with the additional reinforcement of several Pulks from those of the Don, united to small

columns of infantry, would constitute a force fully equal to their subjugation.

This was a fatal error on the part of the Imperial Government, and was the main cause of protracting the struggle in the plains, by instilling into the mountaineers a vast idea of their own superiority, as well as an utter contempt for their adversaries; since, from the superiority of the former in weight, dexterity, and horsemanship, and, above all, in their breed of horses, the Tchernamorskies were speared, sabred, and ridden down by their adversaries to such a degree, that the gradual diminution of their numbers seemed but the prelude to the utter extermination of the whole race.

The infantry at this period were too few in number to be of much avail by themselves: the Russian soldier, as I have previously observed, is a bad tirailleur, and it is only in large, heavy columns that his powers of endurance and unshaken firmness can be brought into play and appreciated; qualities which, however admirable in themselves, it must be confessed are but comparatively of little value

in a warfare where lightness, activity, and individual intelligence are such essential requisites.

The Line Cossacks, who alone matched their opponents in arms, equipment, and skill, were too much scattered to be brought up in any great force; besides, their presence was requisite in covering the line of communication with the Georgian provinces, and their attention well occupied with the Lesguees on the eastern side of the Caucasus.

After repeated and disastrous defeats on the part of the invading forces, a new plan was adopted, and heavy masses of infantry, with powerful trains of field-artillery, brought into play. Then, indeed, the picture was fearfully reversed, as, inspired by the confidence they had acquired in their former conflicts with the Tchernamorskies, and little aware of the formidable nature of the highly-disciplined enemy to whom they were now opposed, the Circassian cavalry, in the dense column formerly practised by the Turkish Spahis, rushed upon the Russian squares and guns, and more than once the former were

crushed, withered, and broken, by their terrific and impetuous onset, in a manner which set all modern tactics at defiance.

But dearly, heavily, were these glories purchased. Thousands of the Muscovite soldiery had fallen; but to what purpose? They formed a mere item in the array of their powerful enemy; other thousands replaced them; whilst of those that fell on the Circassian side, victims to their own rash and ill-fated but chivalrous devotion, from what source was *their* loss, so deep, so irreparable, to be supplied?

Those consequences speedily manifested themselves which I have already mentioned; and the Kabardas first, and next the provinces of the Kouban and Laba rivers, after a long, protracted, and bloody struggle, were compelled to submit, and, giving hostages for their fidelity, remain neutral in the contest now carried on in the mountain districts.

But the inhabitants of the latter provinces now also completely changed their own system of tactique. The lesson attending the reverses of their compatriots had by no means

been lost upon them; and, with no less sagacity than skill, they commenced such a system of harassing and worrying guerilla warfare, that, united with the climate, eternal night-watching, and total absence of any thing like repose, want of provisions, and destitution of proper medical attendance, the loss of the Russians presented a frightful picture of human sacrifice.

Convoys were cut off, outposts surprised, the largest armies even were followed, and numbers slaughtered by an unseen enemy, whose deadly accuracy of aim carried fearful destruction amid the dense ranks and crowded masses of the invaders, whose numbers, discipline, and military skill, were thus rendered nugatory when opposed to individual intrepidity and daring, coupled with natural strength of position, and the quick sagacity and perception of employing it to the highest degree of advantage.

Large bodies of cavalry now seldom acted together, except in cases of great moment; and when the nature of the ground promised success to a dash in upon the Russian columns

before they could form square, or the prospect presented itself (as was the case on a recent occasion)[1] of luring the invading forces into an ambuscade; when, after a heavy and destructive fire from a foe of whose proximity not the remotest trace till then was visible, and where every ball told upon and selected its victim; in the sudden confusion created by such an unexpected event, and through the interval of the fearful gap caused by this deadly shower, the horsemen were among them on the instant, and then the work of slaughter became an absolute butchery; the heavy, disciplined infantry soldier being no match for the nervous-armed, energetic, and mailed rider of the Caucasus.

[1] In the early part of June, 1838, General S—— was defeated with great slaughter, and the loss of the whole of his cannon, colours, and matériel, in a lodgment he attempted on the coast to the southward, which, however, was subsequently effected by a larger force on a second landing. This officer was described as a person wholly destitute of any thing resembling the most ordinary judgment and common-place capacity, and one who never would have been entrusted with the conduct of so important an enterprise had General Golovine taken possession of the Government a few weeks sooner.

These instances, however, are now rare; but, in accordance with the system at present in vogue, bodies of horse, varying from fifty to two or three hundred, under chieftains of undoubted and established reputation, scour the country, falling upon the outposts and small detachments, whose numbers render the prospect of success ever certain, and sweeping off alike stores, cattle, and captives. In the meanwhile, the larger garrisons are closely beleaguered, nor can the soldiery move beyond the walls of their fortifications for the purpose of obtaining forage, wood, or water, without the prospect of a desperate struggle, and not unfrequently the sharp crack of the rifle is heard close under the walls; and the very sentries, in their walks to and fro, fall, pierced to the heart, on their own ramparts.

This mode of warfare on the part of the mountaineers has been productive of additional plans on that of the Imperial Government to subdue them, the surest and most fatal of which has been that (as far as was practicable) of a blockade both by land and sea. It is for this purpose that in every

creek or outlet on the coast, as well as on every commanding point in the interior, small fortresses and outposts have been constructed, which, taken and retaken by each party during the course of the yearly campaigns, but whose occupation is perseveringly followed up, can only be maintained at an expense of blood and treasure absolutely enormous.

Nor is this even the worst of the lot attending the invading forces. These fortifications, from the marshy nature of the situation on which they are erected, are so extremely unhealthy, and engender among the troops garrisoning them such fearful fevers, of a bilious and intermittent description, that, coupled with the watchful and harassing nature of the duty, under which the most robust and muscular frames sink, paralyzed and helpless, reinforcement after reinforcement is obliged to be sent to replace the casualties which death with frightful ravage daily—nay, almost hourly—causes amid their ranks.

It is in a service like this that even the

highest and most chivalrous spirit sinks, withered and subdued, both bodily and mental energy alike being crushed and overwhelmed by the vicissitudes of a mode of life and warfare in which skill, discipline, and bravery, are equally useless and ineffectual.

The line of communication on the Kouban, however well established by the chain of forts on its banks, affords but limited means either of defence against or of conveying information as to the movements of the mountaineers, who pass the river stealthily, and in such small numbers, that the first intimation of their proximity, and subsequent assembly in a body, is their falling upon the nearest outpost whose weakness promises success to the enterprise, or sweeping off the cattle of the farms and various depôts in the neighbourhood, from under the very guns of the fortresses, whose strength alone renders them secure against assault, and whose cross-fire of grape and canister, though it occasionally creates much havoc among the foragers, seldom or ever arrests the devastation occasioned by their movements.

It must not, however, be concealed, that many of the advantages accruing to both belligerents are not unfrequently obtained by the treachery and desertion practised on either side. Two instances of this kind were attended with results of so singular and important a nature to the one party, as fatal and sanguinary to the other, that I shall proceed to relate them.

Two chieftains, I believe of the province of Shapshookh, though united against the common enemy, had, previous to this unison, been in a state of almost constant and deadly feud. What the original cause of the quarrel had been I never could thoroughly ascertain; but it subsequently appeared that, notwithstanding its apparent cessation, it was by no means forgotten by one of them, who, under the veil of cordiality and friendship for his unsuspecting adversary, nourished a hatred of the deadliest and most rancorous nature, and which he surely and steadily, with the utmost subtlety and caution, sought the means of gratifying.

Unfortunately, as it subsequently proved

for both, and ultimately, indeed, for their native province itself, an opportunity was not long wanting. A brother of the first was accused of entering into a correspondence with the Russians, and of having introduced several of their officers in disguise into the country, for the purpose of a military survey towards forming plans of operation for its conquest and subjugation.

His guilt was fully proved, but he avoided his well-merited punishment by escaping across the Kouban.

Among those who the most bitterly inveighed against the delinquent was the chieftain whose hostility has been adverted to, and who now took occasion to spring the mine he had for so long a period been preparing for his adversary, whom he not only accused as the agent and abettor of his brother's flight, but as a participator in his guilt.

In the feverish excitement and exasperation consequent upon the discovery of the defection and treason intended, the chieftain was seized, and, with his whole family, deli-

vered, pending his trial, into the custody of his bitter and relentless enemy.

What passed during this interval was never thoroughly ascertained; but when, after some days' confinement, he was liberated, from the absence of sufficient proof of his having shared the treachery of his relative, the chieftain was worn to a shadow from the rigorous nature of his imprisonment, having been left almost wholly without food or nourishment, and otherwise treated with a severity which, even had his guilt been fully established, could not have been surpassed, while his unfortunate wife had been subjected, after the grossest indignities, to the last—worst insult that brutality could offer!

The latter horrible extremity I must profess my own belief to be a gross exaggeration, it being a proceeding so utterly at variance with and repugnant to the habits and feelings of the mountaineers:[1] but, whether true or

1 This was written some time previous to the publication of Mr. Longworth's interesting work on Circassia. In the seventh chapter of the first volume he adverts to a circumstance of a similar nature, which, from the resemblance in

false, some injury of the deadliest nature must have been offered to have driven the chieftain to the fearful and remorseless retaliation he subsequently pursued.

Collecting the whole of his tribe, with their families, serfs, and followers, he passed the Kouban, and placed himself under Russian protection, being received with the utmost attention and kindness by the Muscovite authorities, to whom he shortly afterwards tendered his allegiance and service, which

all its bearings, leads me to suppose must be the incident alluded to, and therefore unfortunately but too true. The only difference, in point of detail, is that, as related to me, both parties were in the same position as to rank and station; whereas, Mr. Longworth's narrative mentions one only as a noble, the other being of the third class, the Tocavoos, or commoners. From being on the spot, and hearing the account from Circassians themselves, his version of the story must be considered the correct one, as my informant, an intelligent Russian officer of the staff of the army of the Caucasus, could not have possessed such opportunities of entering into the minutiæ of the question as himself. After all, however, the difference is immaterial, except as stamping the proceeding with a colour of greater atrocity in the estimation of the mountaineers, from its involving a violation of the rule which exclusively binds the tribes together, in a manner similar to that practised among the Hindoos, and which is guarded with an equal degree of jeolousy and care.

were joyfully accepted, the rank of colonel of cavalry being conferred upon him, with other military distinction.

The sudden defection of so large a band of tried warriors was a severe loss to the forces of the mountaineers; but this was light to what followed. The newly-made commander quickly caused them to feel the extent of his injuries; and, as his rank made him the senior officer along that part of the river where he had settled, there was no obstacle to check his schemes of vengeance.

Assembling his followers, instead of remaining on the defensive, he joined them to small parties of infantry, and, as the knowledge of the country possessed by his people rendered them the more formidable, from their capability of acting as guides, night after night he passed the Kouban in deathlike secrecy and silence, and entered upon the territory of his native province. His attacks were chiefly, I may say wholly, confined to the tribe of his enemy, who were, one and all, without exception, resisting or otherwise, men, women, and children, delivered up to

one indiscriminate work of slaughter, their houses burned over their heads, and their cattle plundered and driven off.

This system was followed up with such relentless and remorseless energy, such deep-laid and skilfully-planned arrangement, that in two years from its commencement the clan nearly became utterly exterminated; while those that remained, from being remarkable for their opulence and possessions, were reduced to the lowest pitch of beggary, misery, and ruin!

The other incident I have adverted to is that relating to the individual whom I have already so frequently alluded to as my "Friend of the Mountain" (if, indeed, it was, as was generally suspected, the same), and with whom, as previously mentioned, I was very nearly myself, on more than one occasion, most unpleasantly brought in contact.

He was by birth a Tartar chieftain of the Nogais, who had served with considerable reputation in the Russian armies. The hereditary foe of the Circassians, he had rendered the Imperial Government services of the most

valuable nature as a partisan leader. A short time previous to the arrival of the Emperor in the Caucasus (an event which, as I have already intimated, had utterly scared the whole tribe of extortioners and *canaille* of every description, by the salutary examples he made of some of the principals[1]), a serious misunderstanding had arisen between a Russian commander, of great celebrity in point of courage and conduct, and himself. As I could never wholly and clearly arrive at the true state of the origin of this affair, which was represented by the friends of either party with considerable acrimony and bitterness; and I should be sorry, without proof of the most positive and undeniable nature, to cast any reflection upon an officer of the

[1] The Emperor with his own hands tore the epaulettes from the shoulders of Colonel the Prince Dadienoff in front of his men. This worthless miscreant, but for the opportune arrival of his sovereign in the Georgian provinces, would, in all probability, at the present moment, be carrying on his career of cruelty, plunder, extortion, and oppression in every shape. I subsequently heard that, pursuant to the sentence of a general court-martial, he was condemned to degradation and a prolonged term of imprisonment.

General's rank and standing, whose bravery, energy, and talent has acquired him a name and distinction pre-eminent in the ranks of the Imperial forces, I shall forbear all comment or remark upon the transaction in any way; but, from whatever circumstance the misunderstanding originated, the result terminated in the flight of the chieftain across the Kouban, where, it is almost needless to relate, he was joyfully received and welcomed.

The consequences of this defection very soon became terribly evident. Thoroughly acquainted with every inch of the ground, and possessing an intimate knowledge of the strength and force of every garrison and outpost, the Tartar passed the river at the head of a select and picked band of horsemen, some of the results of whose daring enterprise the reader has already been made acquainted with in the course of this narrative.

Bitter, indeed, has since been the regret occasioned by this ill-timed schism, which not only deprived the government of an active, able, and zealous partisan they could ill afford to lose, but placed him at the head of its ene-

mies, and that, too, in a situation where, above all others, his talents had the fullest scope and most vigorous play, and where opportunities presented themselves at every turn to his fierce and energetic spirit of inflicting disgrace and disaster upon his late confederates.

A spirit of relentless and sanguinary vengeance too strongly characterized the Tartar Chieftain's proceedings to leave the slightest doubt, had any indeed been entertained, of the motives which actuated the course he pursued, since each fresh piece of success was as invariably followed by an insulting message to the nearest Russian commander, informing him by whom the blow was struck, and by whose hand the injury was inflicted!

Many and various were the plans proposed for the reparation of this untoward evil; but, in reply to my observation as to what I deemed the simplest and the easiest method of reclaiming him to his former standard, by removing the injustice of which he complained, the answer was, "It is now too late; he has done us too much injury. Besides,

after what has occurred, what confidence could either party repose in the other?"

It is certainly much to be regretted that the contest on both sides has been marked by a cruelty and devastation which, while it has added to the feelings of rancour and hatred which prevail, has been productive of no good whatever to either belligerent. Williameenoff is now no more; but in the records of his career, the impartial writer, while rendering justice to his transcendent abilities as a soldier and commander, must ever hold up to horror and reprobation the system of warfare he pursued, which has left a stain upon his memory nothing will ever subsequently erase from the page of history, and which, among the many humane and enlightened officers who served under him, caused him to be regarded as "un vampire, un vampire du sang;" their own expression, as I have repeatedly heard, when applied to him and his proceedings!

Yermoloff, during his viceroyalty in the Caucasus, was harsh, rigorous, and cruel; but, if the measures which he sometimes had

recourse to, to secure the peace of the country, were such as humanity shudders at, the effect they produced must not be overlooked, as it was a common saying during his government, that a child even, in charge of a sum of money, might traverse the whole of the provinces subject to his dominion in perfect security and safety.

Let this be contrasted with the state of the country at the period General Golovine was first installed in his command; when, unless armed to the teeth, and accompanied by an escort, a person incurred the risk of being plundered by the wandering tribes under the very walls of Teflis. To this day, the remembrance of the government of Yermoloff is cherished with a sigh of regret; and, in comparison with other Russian rulers, like himself destitute of fortune, one circumstance speaks volumes as to his probity, which is, that he now resides in privacy at Moscow, after all his honourable offices and high situations, eating the black bread of the soldier, as poor a man, or even poorer, than when he first entered upon his career.

What a contrast does this present to the conduct of the Baron Rosen, who, in the space of six years, as Governor-General, not only cleared himself from pecuniary embarrassments of a very extensive nature, but, when deprived of his office, remitted to Russia, in addition, a sum equivalent to £120,000 sterling, an amount in itself more than double the entire of his salary for the whole of that period!

Yermoloff was also remarkable for his considerate kindness to the junior ranks of the army, and his attention to the comforts, health, and safety of the private soldiers—circumstances at that period of a very rare and unusual nature; and, in the various affairs with the mountaineers, the rigid scrutiny that was instituted regarding the returns of killed and wounded, and strict inquiry as to how far the numbers lost or disabled was owing to the ignorance, negligence, or incapacity of the officers, was an event almost till then unknown in the ranks of the Muscovite armies.

He also possessed a marked degree of aversion for the pipe-clay and martinet system,

then and now (though not to so great an extent) so much in vogue — cleanliness, fighting, and obedient to orders, being the only points, like our own great Duke, he either cared for or regarded; and, provided these were well and duly attended to, the cut of the soldier's pantaloons, the padding of his coat, or the statuelike stiffness of his attitude, were not merely subjects of indifference, but frequently of disdain and ridicule.

Williameenoff's movements, on the contrary, were constantly marked with utter disregard, and in several instances wantonly so, of the lives of his soldiery. This was particularly manifest in his route from Stavrapol, on the Kouban, to Pshat, on the coast of the Black Sea, through the gorges of the mountains, and a subsequent march upon another point further northward. In both cases, his line was one continued track of slaughter from an ambushed and almost unseen foe, while what were the objects he proposed to accomplish, or what advantages to gain by these manœuvres, it is impossible for the imagination to conceive. If for the mere purpose

of securing the two points in question, it would have proved much easier of acquirement, and have been obtained at a tenth part of the sacrifice, by embarking the troops either from the side of Georgia or the Crimea, and proceeding at once direct to the scene of action; or if, as must be imagined, the intention was to have opened a line of communication between the Kouban and the Black Sea,[1] one lesson, it would be supposed, must have been sufficient to have convinced him that, if an army of twenty-two thousand men (for such was the amount of his force) commanded by a General of his acknowledged ability, could not pass over the ground without having every inch of the way obstinately disputed, what prospect was there of an inferior number of troops ever making the attempt with any chance of success?[2] In his

[1] This was eventually so far established that three fortresses, viz., those of Aboon, Nicholaieff, and Alexandrinsky, were erected on this route. In lieu, however, of forming a chain of support, the troops composing their respective garrisons may be said to have been prisoners, confined to the precincts of their own ramparts!

[2] I was informed, by several Russian officers, who had not however been engaged in the enterprise, that in the

second attempt I am rather inclined to believe he never reached the coast at all.

It certainly must be confessed, that much of the defeat and disaster attending the Muscovite arms in the contest, as well as its immense sacrifice of life and enormous expenditure, has been owing to the folly and imbecility, rapacity, and venality, of some of

first of these expeditions Williameenoff very narrowly escaped being cut off with the *whole* of the force under his command; for so utterly broken and disorganized were his columns on again reaching the banks of the Kouban, from the incessant charges of the fierce and fiery horsemen who assailed and never let them know rest, that he was only rescued from his perilous situation, and enabled to carry his army across by the sufferance of his opponents, to whom he had solemnly pledged his oath and word of honour, that the war was at an end, and that he was evacuating the country by express orders to that effect from his imperial master. Had it not been for this duplicity and falsehood, not a single Russian, it is asserted, would have ever repassed the river alive. As my informants, though persons on whom the utmost reliance could be placed, might still either have been mistaken or misinformed, from not having been with the army themselves, I was led to doubt the correctness of the intelligence; but, having since heard it confirmed through various channels, above all, at Berlin, where the most accurate tidings are invariably obtained regarding the belligerent events occurring in the Caucasus, I have thought it advisable to mention it.

the Imperial commanders; and, in fact, as my friend L—— remarked, the most arduous and difficult duties of Generals Golovine, Grabbé, Raiewski, and other well-disposed, honest, and high-minded Russian authorities, consisted in repairing the mischief occasioned by the corrupt conduct and incapacity of their predecessors and subordinates.[1]

But now the question arises, has the immense extent of blood and treasure lavished by Russia in furtherance of its designs, in the construction of its numerous posts and fortresses, advanced her schemes in the subjugation of the country?

To this I can only reply, that time alone can explain what results may attend the system now in force for the conquest and subjection of the Caucasian tribes. The

[1] A few days previous to the arrival of the Emperor at Ghelendjik, the magazines of Williameenoff's army took fire, and were burned to the ground. Though the accusation was never thoroughly brought home to him, strong suspicions prevailed that the incendiarism was owing to his own secret instructions to conceal from his sovereign the mouldy and unwholesome nature of the provisions he had laid in store for the use of the soldiery.

struggle is one which future ages cannot, and will not, view without surprise and admiration. On the one hand, a mighty empire, which a century ago was scarcely known, and wholly disregarded in the councils of Europe, but whose power and rapid advancement in territorial aggrandizement has rendered her at the present moment an object of alarm to some, of hatred to others, while a shade of disquiet and suspicion pervades *all*, and causes a vigilant watchfulness to be maintained upon her slightest movement; the extent of whose territories embraces a third of the habitable globe, with revenue and resources, and an army which, in numerical strength, doubles that of the largest of any other nation in the world, and equals one-third of the entire population of the belligerent power opposed to them.

On the other, a people scattered and dispersed, and numbering, from the shores of the Caspian to those of the Black Sea, including women and children, scarcely three millions of souls, wholly destitute of money, cannon, and material, with nothing to oppose to their

formidable foe, but the nervous arms, dauntless energy, high hearts, ardent patriotism, and untameable fierceness, together with the fastnesses and difficulties of their soil, which, since the creation of the world, have preserved their native land from the yoke and supremacy of a foreign sway. That land of grandeur and sublime beauty, with its rich valleys and deep gorges, but which, begirt with swamps and marshes, is far more fatal to the ranks of the invaders than the unerring rifle of the mountaineer; while higher, and far higher than the range of the Muscovite cannon, are flats of singular richness and fertility; and there, in peace and security, range the flocks and herds of the tribes, whilst those of their adversary dare not venture for an instant beyond range of their guns; in rear of these again rises the hoary patriarch Elborooz, with its chain of eternal snows, smiling as if in grim derision at the idea of its independence ever being laid at the foot of a stranger.

I particularly remember one occasion at Piatigorsk, a short time previous to my de-

parture; the evening was unusually calm, serene, and beautiful, and, far as the eye could reach, the chain of the Caucasus seemed spread as on a map before my companion and myself. He was an officer of rank on the staff, and spoken of by all as a gentleman of consummate ability and talent, while of his many high and noble personal qualities, I had more than once been a witness.

We were gazing on the scene before us, each occupied with his own reflections; mine were wholly enwrapt in the beauty of the picture presented to our view, occasionally mingled with anxiety regarding the probable fate of some of my late companions—I may say friends, for seldom in any land have I met the kindness and attention I received from them, and whom I knew at that moment to be engaged in a final expedition against the mountaineers, previous to the army going into winter quarters.

The thoughts of Colonel N——n, though he at times reverted to the picturesque nature of the landscape, were evidently of a

more professional character, as, half thinking, he suddenly gave vent to the following soliloquy:—

"Years must elapse before we succeed, and then, what a force must be necessary to retain it, even should success ultimately follow! what say you?"

The latter part of the sentence being apparently, though in some measure unconsciously, addressed to myself, I replied that the question at the present moment was one which the keenest-sighted statesman, or the ablest commander, would find it extremely difficult to answer, considering the difference of aspect which might be given to the affair under a change of circumstances, which the varying events of the Western hemisphere rendered by no means wholly improbable; that, viewing it simply as a soldier, I should say there were two great reasons against the chances of an early and speedy subjugation of the country; the one, consisting in its strength and difficulty of access, combined with the proverbial devotion and determined resolu-

tion of a mountain race, which have ever rendered them in all parts of the globe the most difficult of all classes of people to be brought under the subjection of a foreign power; and again, because the Russian soldier, while he was in all probability as good a grenadier as any in the world, as a light infantry soldier, was the very worst.

"Being a mountaineer yourself," he replied, with a smile, "you of course speak with the thoughts and feelings of one."

"And you," I rejoined, "with those of a Russian staff-officer,—*voilà tout.*"

Here terminate the extracts from my journal relating to these interesting regions; and I know not how it is, but the pen yet lingers on the outline it has traced, as if reluctant to quit the theme. My sojourn in the Caucasus and its provinces[1] had afforded

[1] The ancient kingdom of Georgia, with the provinces wrested from Persia, formed by the boundary of the Arras, are all included under the official designation of "Le Gouvernment du Caucase," and consequently subject to its ruler.

me throughout one uninterrupted source of pleasure and enjoyment. I had been received by all ranks and classes, the Russian and the Cossack, the Circassian and the Tartar, with a friendliness and hospitality which, to the end of existence, will ever be remembered with the deepest and warmest feelings of regard.

Wild and exciting, the existence I had led for so many months had its drawbacks, it is true; but what situation in life is there without them? Being shot at by a Russian vidette (a mistake, of course), or kidnapped by a Circassian, (another mistake), are events most assuredly the very reverse of agreeable, (and *no mistake*), and to which the generality of persons, myself included, have a reasonable degree of objection; but *still*, when subsequently, amid the brilliant coteries and gorgeous court of St. Petersburg, the military circles of Berlin, the select and elegant assemblies of the British capital, or the gay and dissipated scenes of Paris or Vienna, busy memory has ever turned with a lingering

regret to those joyous hours, the happiest perhaps of my life, passed amid the wild and picturesque regions of the plains and mountains of Circassia.

NOTE.—A short time after my last return from Constantinople and the Black Sea, the commencement of the present year, (1840,) I saw in the Morning Herald, a paper whose foreign intelligence is usually of the most accurate description, an account of the late Russian disasters in the Caucasus. The detail, however incredible it appeared at the first glance, was at the same time confirmed by many German and other foreign newspapers, supposed to be in the Russian interest, and the correspondence of the Times, Standard, Globe, Morning Post, and other leading journals. The account furnished by the first-named periodical is of so graphic and vivid a description, and exhibits such a complete mastery of the subject, that it must be either the *boná fide* statement of an actor or spectator of the whole, or of a person thoroughly

well acquainted with the country and every part of the ground forming the scene of action.

From this it appears that the same plan had been adopted by the mountaineers on the coast I had myself witnessed on the Kouban, viz., that of suddenly attacking the various forts and garrisons in detail, before any succour could reach them; and a similar degree of success seems to have been the result, since, one after the other, not only the whole of the fortresses on the sea-coast have fallen, but the strong posts of Aboon, Nicholaieff, and Alexandrinsky, forming the chain established on the dearly-bought, but, as I have shown, ineffective, road of Williameenoff, between the Kouban and the Black Sea. This will prove a severe blow to the Imperial Government, since the whole labour of the last three years for the subjugation of the country, accomplished, too, at such an immense loss of blood and treasure, is thus at one blow thrown to the ground. Nor is this the whole of the evil. By the capture of these works, the Circassians have become

possessed of a large number of field-pieces, and other ordnance of a heavier calibre, together with an immense extent of military stores of all kinds, a vast amount of cattle of every description, and a numerous train of captives and prisoners, while considerable shipments of powder, lead, and salt, have been landed on the coast almost without opposition.

The loss of so many thousand brave, tried, and skilful soldiers, though the part least cared for by a Power to whom even a 100,000 men are as nothing, still cannot but in some measure be felt, from their being composed of hardy, experienced veterans, inured to the climate, and accustomed to the mode of warfare in practice, while their place must be supplied by raw troops, drawn from the interior of the empire, wholly unhabituated either to the one or the other. The loss of the Circassians, however, by the same account, appears to have been extremely severe, especially in the capture of the important fortress of Shapshine, which was carried in a few minutes, after the customary sweeping

loss from the grape and canister of the garrison, when a mortal and deadly hand-to-hand conflict ensued, in the midst of which the powder-magazine *à l'ordinaire* exploded, involving all in its immediate proximity in one universal scene of destruction.[1]

[1] The following sketch is taken from the account published by the *Times* on this occasion, 25th of May, 1840:—

"The Circassians have stormed, and captured since the commencement of last winter, the whole range of fortresses on their coast, which have been the sole aim and occupation of the Russian large naval and military force employed against the country for the last three years. The achievement of such a series of signal successes, without the aid of artillery, by an undisciplined multitude, against redoubts constructed and defended, according to the best principles of modern military tactics, forms a phenomenon in warfare, which the accounts before us do not wholly explain, though they do not leave us without a clue to the tactics of the Circassians, which we shall now proceed briefly to describe. The position of all the forts in question was close upon the sea, at the embouchere of narrow valleys, bordered to the very shore by ranges of steep and thickly-wooded hills, at so little distance from each other, that a fort placed halfway, which in such a position could hardly be avoided, was commanded from either side.

"The walls, or rather embankments of each redoubt, could be constructed of no other materials than the soil of the spot; and, although surrounded by a fosse, this tended little to augment their security, as the height thus occasioned rendered it necessary to give the embankment ex-

The total killed on the Russian side, including those who perished by the explosion in this affair, alone amounted to upwards of 2,000, while half that number, who were all of the garrison that survived this work of carnage, laid down their arms and surrendered. Of the Circassians it is stated upwards of 300 fell on the occasion, including some of their best and bravest warriors.

teriorily a considerable slope, by which means scaling, even without the aid of ladders or other implements, became a matter of little difficulty. Further, as each of these enclosures had been made of considerable extent, to afford to the garrison the only exercise in which they could indulge, it will easily be seen how liable to surprise such a place was, during the night, from the neighbouring population, who, devoting themselves to that sole object, could watch their time and take their measures, without observation or obstruction on the part of the devoted garrison. In fact, secresy, darkness, and resolution, combined all that was requisite on the part of the Circassians; and the project of the capture of the forts by surprise, and which commenced by the attack on Sootcha on the 9th of October last, has been crowned with triumphant success."

CHAPTER VI.

Description of the Baths—A cursory glance at the Caucasus, its people, and the present contest.

Before resuming my route northward, according to the intimation previously given, I shall offer a slight sketch of the baths of the Caucasus, the powerful mineral waters of which are so little known beyond the frontier of the Russian dominions.

They consist of the iron, both hot and cold; the something else, the real designation of which Heaven alone can tell (I am very sure I can't, and never yet met with any body that could), but which are universally known and described as "Les bains du potage;" the sulphur-baths, and the sourwassers; each on an average being about fifteen miles equi-

distant from the other. The direction of the whole is under the superintendence of an officer appointed by government, and the general arrangement of the entire establishment most admirably conducted.

Of the two former, the first is very little frequented. The spring is situated in the midst of a beautiful and thickly-wooded vale, which the Russian authorities have with great care and attention laid out, and constructed into walks exhibiting considerable taste, and which, in their deep shade and tranquil retirement, are of considerable benefit to the invalid. The second is chiefly resorted to by those suffering from wounds, weakness of frame, and other disorders of a similar nature. The name in itself (les bains du potage) sufficiently indicates what its waters resemble. Like those of Baden, it altogether possesses the taste and character of chicken-broth, though of a much stronger nature; and, indeed, in my own estimation, is of a far better quality than a similar liquid usually doled out to those under the discipline of the sulphur-baths, who are rigidly confined to the most

meagre regimen possible of all the dietetics, and most assuredly incomparably superior to the soup forming part of the rations of the Russian soldier.

These springs are situated in the town of Hassan Turquie, forming one of the largest and most populous of the military colonies in this quarter; and it often occurred to me what an economical result would follow the measure of the Russian government ordering three or four regiments to be quartered in the neighbourhood, not to mention the less labour it would be to the soldier, who would thus, as it were, find his rations ready cooked, without the necessity of any fatigue-party being detached for that duty.

The sulphur-baths, which next occur, are immeasurably the strongest hitherto discovered throughout the globe; so great, indeed, is their power, that they are divided into three distinct grades, or classes, termed "Les bains d'Alexandre, Yermoloff, et Nicholas," each varying in strength, from dilution, it having been found to prove extremely hazardous for invalids to commence the usual routine of a

course of these waters in their natural state, without some degree of preparation.

The disorders for which they are chiefly prescribed, and in amelioration of which their efficiency is almost supernatural, are rheumatism, gout, scrofulous habit of body, and nervous and paralytic affections. They are for internal use as well as external application; and the number of glasses usually drank at the commencement are four, being two in the morning and a similar number in the evening, which quantity gradually increases, till, at the expiration of the period of the prescribed course, from ten to twelve is generally the average taken between rising in the morning and retiring at night.

After the probationary period of ten or twelve days at the waters of the two former, the bather is introduced to that of Nicholas, his initiation into which he is not likely very speedily to forget. On passing from the dressing-room to the bath, and entering the apartment, he is nearly knocked down by the sulphureous vapour, with which it is filled almost to suffocation, and which, for the mo-

ment, half induces the belief in the mind of the affrighted patient that he has entered upon the precincts of a very hot place considerably below the surface of the earth. Regaining a little composure, he is made aware of the presence of a Russian soldier, who stands by to guard against his being overcome either by the vapour or heat (a circumstance, by the by, of no unusual occurrence), in which case, but for this precaution, suffocation must inevitably ensue, as, with the exception of a small space at the entrance, occupied by this man, forming the first of the flight of steps descending into the bath, which occupies the entire of the apartment, no other standing room is there throughout the whole.

Having screwed himself to the task, the invalid now plunges one leg within the water, and as quickly withdraws it again, with an involuntary howl of dismay, in the supposition that, by some mischance, he has popped the limb into a furnace, so intense is the heat. In bitter agony of spirit, he turns towards the Russian sentry, in the expectation of meeting pity, consolation—any thing, in fact, that will

afford even a fancied relief to the murderous torture this disagreeable lesson in experimental philosophy has occasioned.

But he had much better, when once in, have left it there, as the pain, however severe, is but momentary, and withdrawing it only causes a more aggravated repetition of his misery; while, as to looking for any thing like sympathy in the wooden, imperturbable features of his Muscovite attendant, he might as well attempt to trace something expressive of feeling in the figure-head of the Mars, Neptune, Pallas, or any other classical vessel in our navy. The chuckling, derisive grin of an English country bumpkin even would be more agreeable in comparison; though a laugh against one's-self is *not* in general the most amusing thing in the world, however much we may enjoy it at the expense of another.

But the moments are fast passing: five minutes is the limit to the time allowed for his period of occupation, and the bather must make up his mind to act. In utter desperation of spirit, he rushes in all at once, utters

a yell of agony, and, after having floundered and spluttered about like a porpoise struck with a harpoon, half boiled alive, and completely worn out, exhausted, and helpless, he drags himself into the dressing-room, when, enwrapt in huge folds of linen, and having been scrubbed down by the attendant, he sinks upon a sofa, a baleful and vindictive spirit of misanthropy rendering him disposed to invoke all sorts of mischances upon his own head, provided a due allowance of the same could be meted out to his tormentors. Each day witnesses a similar scene, till at last, like eels, I suppose, the patient gets used to it.

During this trying probation, an equally severe dietetic system is prescribed, and rigorously enforced, dry bread and coffee being the only viands permitted at breakfast; a very meagre broth (not half so good as I have already mentioned, as the "bains du potage" at Hassan Turquie,) with a plain cutlet, for dinner; and a cup of green tea, with a dry crust, again at night. This constitutes the only provant the invalid is ever permitted, under any circumstances whatever, to employ

his powers of mastication upon; the whole routine throughout thus forming a system of discipline requiring the utmost nerve and resolution (at least, for an Englishman) to adhere to.

I must not, however, in ordinary justice, omit to mention, that the beneficial effects derived from this severe penance are beyond all parallel, and must be personally witnessed for a correct idea to be formed of its restorative power. Among the many examples that occurred during my own stay at the Wells, I may mention the amelioration, if not absolute recovery, of two persons, whose cases had been hitherto pronounced perfectly incurable; the first from a rheumatic affection, which had previously led him through a tour of all the mineral springs in Europe, without deriving the least benefit from their application; and the second, from a paralytic seizure, which had deprived the whole of his left side of all its vital functions, leaving him a pitiable, helpless cripple.

The baths are but few in number in comparison with the crowds who frequent them: a

most extensive augmentation of the buildings, however, is in course of preparation, and in the mean time the arrangements of the Russian government for the convenience of the invalids frequenting them are so admirably ordered and directed, that little or no confusion ever occurs, the management being conducted in the following manner.

The entire superintendence and control of the baths is under the direction of an officer appointed for that purpose, at whose office tickets are obtained for a stated period, which time is immediately notified to those in charge of the springs, who have everything in readiness for the bather's accommodation. By this simple method, though sometimes from a hundred and twenty to a hundred and thirty persons arrive in the course of the day, little or no dispute or disturbance ever occurs.

The accommodation and lodgment of the visitors vary, of course, in proportion to their wants and means, but which, under all circumstances, is extremely expensive: that of the Grand Auberge, termed the Imperial Hotel, is certainly the best; but a small bed-

room there, even, cannot be obtained under the cost of a ducat or nine shillings a day. The usual method is by engaging apartments in the houses constructed for the purpose by the free and populous peasantry, and other colonists settled in the neighbourhood, which are obtained (though of course by no means so good) at a much more moderate rate.

In front of the hotel runs a public promenade, or boulevard, which forms a delightful lounge of an evening, a military band from the garrison at Stavrapol enlivening and adding to the hilarity of the scene. On a fine, clear day, the eye wanders as far as it can reach along the snowy chain of the Caucasus, which forms an imposing and sublime spectacle.

Once a week a public ball takes place in the grand saloon of the hotel; but, in general, musical re-unions and pic-nics to the various beautiful scenes in the neighbourhood (when they can be ventured upon with safety), form the chief amusement of the assembled community.

After a period of six weeks' nauseating,

parboiling, and drenching, the visitors take flight to the Sourwassers at Kislavosk, there to reanimate and restore their wasted and attenuated figures—an event, the sudden fulfilment of which, from the effect of these springs, is, indeed, almost magical. What the nature of these waters is, and of what minerals they are composed, I had no means of ascertaining, but of their enlivening and exhilarating effects I can speak from personal experience, since on the first occasion of my taking them, albeit a quiet, sober-minded person in general, no bottle of champagne could have more disposed me for a scene of Donnybrook fair description; and, in fact, I am led to believe that to their influence must be traced some of the wild freaks of my companions, in which they not unfrequently inveigled me to share, and of which, of course, as an Englishman, instead of a participator, I invariably had the full credit of being the head.

In acidity of taste and effervescence, these waters strongly resemble those of Nassau, though possessing a far more pungent spirit;

indeed, having dashed the glass into the spring, and raised it on the instant to my lips, the gas was so strong that, in addition to being half-choked, I was nearly laid upon my back with its power, while my nasal organ did not wholly recover the twitching it sustained on the occasion for some hours afterwards.

The spring is situated in the midst of a beautiful glen, which, similar to that at the Iron Waters, has, by order of the government, been laid out in gardens, and forms a delightful place of resort, both for the evening promenade and general exercise.

A fortnight or three weeks' residence at, and course of, these waters completely reinvigorates and restores the system, weakened and reduced to the lowest ebb by the purgatorial process experienced at Piatigorsk, though it is then only the invalid begins to experience the beneficial results derived from the latter, and how much he has benefitted by the severe ordeal he has undergone.

I shall now, in concluding this part of my narrative relative to the Caucasus, take a

slight survey of its inhabitants, laws, and customs, and the conflict at the present moment raging between the mountaineers and their powerful invaders—on whose right to the disputed territory I offer no opinion either of condemnation or otherwise, this work being confined to subjects of a military, personal, or descriptive character solely, towards the elucidation of which the following outline is alone portrayed, it being rendered necessary for the more thorough comprehension of some of the passages of this journal, which would otherwise be incomplete, and somewhat difficult to understand without it.

Of the wilder and more mountainous regions, a full and graphic account has recently been published by two enterprising English travellers,[1] to whose narrative these imperfect sketches will, in some degree, form a sequel, relating as they do in a great measure to those parts of the country overrun and subdued by the Russian arms.

The entire range of the Caucasus, with the

[1] Messrs. Bell and Longworth.

rich plains at its base, though divided into several provinces, with a great variety of tribes, sects, and dialects, have generally been recognised by the inhabitants of the adjacent countries, as composing two grand divisions formed by the bisecting line of the Pass of the Vladicaucase; that part to the westward being known by the general term of Cherkesse, or Circassia, and that to the eastward by the name of Lesghistan, or country of the Lesghees.

Its population may be said to be divided into four classes—the Pshahs, or princes; the Oozdens, or nobles; and the Tocavoos, or commoners: these may be said to form the real native population, as the fourth, however numerous, are slaves only, two-thirds of whom are composed of a mixed race of Tartar origin, Russian and Polish deserters, and captives of every kind.

In the plains, previous to the Russian invasion, the power of the second class was great, but that of the first almost unbounded; and much of the bloodshed and foraying system in former days was owing to this

despotic power. It was not altogether similar to the feudal sway possessed in former days by the English nobility, neither did it completely resemble the hereditary and patriarchal sovereignty of the Highland chieftain —it was a mixture of both; and its purposes for good or evil depended, as may be supposed, much upon the individual character of each ruler.

The word of the Prince, and his will and pleasure, was the sole law recognised by his immediate retainers, who, at a whistle, were ever ready in the saddle to espouse his cause, whether just or otherwise. This state of things, as may naturally be conceived, engendered all the good and evil qualities that existed in other countries under a similar mode of government: the most undaunted bravery, the highest degree of chivalrous heroism, the most winning courtesy, and the finest feelings of social friendship and hospitality, being too often mingled with the most relentless cruelty, the very worst species of selfish, grasping, and unprincipled ambition, and the most pitiless avarice.

Indeed, so utterly intolerable, in some parts of the country, was the height to which the tyranny of the nobles had attained, that the usual feudal tie between the suzerain and his vassal had been much shaken—indeed, in the more remote regions, altogether severed asunder—by the formation of the third class, composing the great bulk of the people, into federal communities for their mutual support and protection, and which, some time previous to the Russian invasion, had become so formidable that the only check the higher orders possessed on this revolutionary movement was by establishing a corresponding system among themselves.

Like the Arab of the Desert, but once you have broken bread with them your person is sacred; and not only does your konag, or host, regard himself as responsible for your safety, but the whole tribe to which he belongs deems their honour as being concerned to secure it. Of the reverential character of this tie, I could adduce many instances, as, on several occasions, when two or three of my friends and myself have been the guests of

those whose adhesion to the Russian government has been of a very equivocal character, in no one instance did we meet with the slightest molestation or attempt at injury in any shape whatever.

There are, of course, some exceptions to this rule, which are mostly found amongst those tribes inhabiting the southern part of the coast of the Black Sea, and whose reputation is of so indifferent a character as nearly to cause them to be cut off, and excluded from all communion and intercourse with their countrymen.

In point of religion, though professing that of the Prophet of Mecca, which has been introduced from their constant intercourse with the Turks, few nations in the world are so little tainted with bigotry as the Circassians, and a zealous member of the Faithful could not but be utterly scandalized at the profound reverence paid by the votaries of Mahomet to a cross by the roadside (which is invariably the case), and other lax observances incompatible with a strict observance of the precepts of Islamism; indeed, its minis-

ters are never permitted in any way whatever to interfere with either their pleasures, laws, customs, or institutions, which for the most part retain the same primitive order that has for centuries subsisted among them.

I have mentioned the cross as sometimes, though but rarely, found placed in different parts of the country, which is an evidence of Christianity having at some period, at least, found footing there, though at what date, or under what circumstances, it is impossible to discover. It may readily be supposed the Circassians are very little interested in the matter; and their only answer, when questioned on the subject, is a careless and indifferent "Allah billeer!" (God knows!)

Tumuli, also, in some instances of considerable size, similar to the cairns in Scotland, are scattered over the country, forming, as the inhabitants declare, the burial-places of their forefathers; but whether of ancient or comparatively modern construction, I had no means of ascertaining.

Here a difficult question arises, and one which has puzzled the most diligent, searching,

and persevering antiquaries, whose unwearied labours have been directed to its solution—"From whom, or what, has sprung the present race, inhabiting the mountain regions as well as rich plains of the Caucasus?"

I think it is either Klaproth or Marigny who do not hesitate to assert that the princes and nobles of the Kabardas are descendants of a colony of Teutonic knights. These provinces are by far the finest and most fertile of all the plains of the Kouban—their aristocracy the richest and most powerful—and the authority and influence of their chiefs, even though now subjugated to Russian dominion, partaking, as it ever has done in some degree, of a patriarchal character, the most extensive and established.

It is here are bred the finest horses in the country—a race which, though seldom reaching fifteen hands in height, possess a fleetness, blood, and spirit, united to prodigious strength and bottom, which render them invaluable for military service; since, though essentially trained for outpost duties, and other service of a light cavalry nature, their great weight

renders their riders in the mêlée, accoutred as they are in their flexible but impenetrable (to the sword, at least) coat of mail, an equal match for the lancer and dragoon, or even with the cuirassier.

The Kabardas are also celebrated for a higher, brighter, and richer production, for which, indeed, the palm is tacitly ceded them throughout the provinces of the Caucasus, without one dissenting voice. I allude to that which the records of Oriental romance have rendered us familiar with from our earliest infancy—on which the glowing eulogium of the poets of every land has loved to linger, and which, whether in classic Byzantium or modern Stamboul, has in the same degree ever been coveted, sought after, and obtained at any cost—the beauty and loveliness of its women.

Shall I confess the truth that, in this point, I was rather *(a very little, perhaps)* disappointed? Whether this was owing to the previous expectations I had formed (as invariably is the case) being wound up to too high a pitch, or whether it was that the op-

portunities which presented themselves of my viewing these gazelle-eyed houris were few in comparison with those I had witnessed in Georgia, certain it is, it struck me that female beauty here was not so generally characteristic as in the latter country. On the other hand, however, when your face is so far whitened (I must solicit indulgence for my Eastern phrases and metaphor) *Anglicè*, when you are so far favoured as to behold what, in their own land, is esteemed a Circassian belle, the theme of whose beauty is on every tongue, then, indeed, you may say you have witnessed what no other country can possess, unless exported from this.

Reader, have you ever been on the sunny banks of the Guadalquiver, at Seville, or Cadiz? as I have some eight years ago, before this d—d civil, or rather uncivil war (I beg pardon again for swearing, but I really cannot help doing so when I think of it,) turned that ill-fated and unhappy land into a field of blood, pillage, sacrilege, and democratic misrule? If you have, picture to yourself the dark, glowing, lustrous eye, and raven tresses of

the Andalusian, conjoined with a delicacy of complexion, a melange of the rose and the lily, characteristic of our Northern beauty, with a mouth whose ruby freshness, in sculptured perfection, might rival the choicest productions of the Phidian chisel; to this let be added the same exquisite symmetry of form, with the equally delicate and richly cut hands and feet, conjoined with an average of nearly two inches additional height, and you have the portrait before you of a young Circassian girl, in the full pride of her spring beauty.

But, if disappointed generally in the estimation I had formed of the fair sex, what shall I say of the male portion of the creation? Why, simply, that to features which in classic regularity and outline form the finest models of manly beauty the world contains, (and well bears out the assertion that the Caucasus is the cradle of the human race,) is joined a figure, which, for symmetry and height, blended with activity and strength, forms the beau ideal of all that is noble, dignified, and soldier-like.

Equestrian exercise and field-sports, as

well as dancing and music, are amusements of which they are immoderately fond, and, of all things relating to civilized life, none afford them the charms and pleasures possessed by the two latter; indeed, to such an extent is this passion among them carried, that I have been informed, during the season at the Hot Wells, it is by no means uncommon for several of the chieftains and nobles, who are openly and avowedly arrayed against the invading forces, when they know they can place implicit reliance upon the faith and honour of the General opposed to them, to solicit a safe conduct, and permission to pass the period at that gay rendezvous; a request, singular as it may appear, is almost as invariably complied with, and which, as many of their compatriots informed me, was much more productive of beneficial results to the Muscovite interest than all the skirmishes, battles, and forays of a twelvemonth together.

A singular and amusing rencontre formed the sequel to an incident of this kind on one occasion. I have previously mentioned the daring capture, and subsequent liberation,

after paying a heavy ransom, of Mr. S—, a German traveller, in the service of the Russian government, by an intrepid chieftain; which event took place even to the northward of Stavrapol, the head-quarters of the Commander-in-Chief on the Kouban.

The following year, this gentleman, being at Piatigorsk for the benefit of his health, one night, on the occasion of a grand ball in commemoration of the Empress's birthday, remarked a fine, stalwart, noble-looking Circassian chieftain, whose countenance it forcibly struck him he had somewhere met with before.

The mountaineer, at the period in question, was agreeably occupied in paying his devoirs to two young ladies, whose animated looks and gestures proclaimed them anything but uninterested in the conversation of their gallant and handsome entertainer. A nearer approach satisfied Mr. S— that what he had at first been inclined to believe was the mere visionary offspring of his own imagination, and beyond the range of all possibility, was not only very possible, but that actually, *bonâ*

fide, before him, stood the very man to whom he was doubly indebted—first, for a three days' ride, the very reminiscence of which at all times caused him invariably to rub behind, and, again, for making a considerable diminution in the balance-sheet carried to his credit at his banker's—both of which events all the apologies of his captor, though made with the most amazing politeness and good breeding, had never completely eradicated the soreness engendered thereby.

Though utterly petrified and aghast at so much assurance, and even yet half disposed to doubt the reality of his senses, he slipped out of the room, and having found the Commandant of the garrison, related the whole history of the affair to him.

To the utter discomfiture of the unfortunate narrator, his recital was listened to with scarcely repressed laughter, and, on requesting somewhat pettishly to know what had given rise, in his estimation, to such ill-timed mirth, was informed, in reply, that whoever the stranger was, if the blood of the Emperor was on his hands, no harm could befal him,

he having come there under the safeguard of General Raiewski, which on no account whatever could be violated, the word and honour of that gallant and distinguished officer being pledged for his safety.

It was, however, suggested that possibly Mr. S— might be mistaken in the person he had imagined to be the *chef des brigands* to whom he had been indebted for his tour into the interior of the mountains; and, on re-entering the saloon, the Commandant at once proceeded to the chieftain, and, presenting the traveller, informed him of the narrative he had just heard, and requested to be informed as to its authenticity and correctness.

Gravely and steadily regarding the countenance of the German for a moment, the Circassian, with the utmost suavity of manner, positively declared it was the same, inquired with the most solicitous kindness after the health of his late *friend* (?) and finally wound up with declaring the great pleasure it would afford him to see him again under his roof? an intimation of so obliging a nature, (though, whether intended as an invitation, or, as

formerly, on an affair of business, (!) it was difficult to say,) as to cause Mr. S— involuntarily to start back, with a gesture expressive of anything but acquiescence in the wishes of his former acquaintance, while a general titter, especially among the female part of the community, ran through the whole circle.

I have already alluded to the surpassing dexterity of the mountaineers in horsemanship. In the various equestrian games practised among them is one which I had never yet witnessed in the East. It is two horsemen starting off at speed, side by side, each clasping the hand of the other, and thus endeavouring to pull his adversary from the saddle. I tried the experiment on one occasion, but, as might have been expected, very soon had the worst of it; for, on presenting my hand, it was grasped with such force as almost made me doubt for the moment whether or not I had by some mistake thrust it into a smith's vice.

In less than two minutes my head was down to my saddle-bow. I held on like grim death, but gradually found my hold loosening,

when my antagonist very considerately released me, by flinging my arm from him with so much force, that I regained my seat almost at the expense of dislocating my shoulder.

The experiment was perfectly sufficient; and I inwardly resolved, previous to repeating it, to take a few preparatory lessons, and to experimentalize upon those whom I should discover to be equally ignorant, or more so, than myself.

Of the various noble families, the most renowned and esteemed is not of Circassian origin, but, comparatively speaking, recently transplanted among them. I allude to the illustrious house of Gheray, the ancient Khans of the Tartars of the Crimea, who, on the subjugation of that country by the Russian arms, found a refuge in the plains and mountains of the Caucasus, little deeming, at the time, that, before another half century had elapsed, their descendants, even in those wild regions, would be compelled to submit that gigantic and far-spreading power, whose dominion and supremacy they had quitted

their native land in voluntary exile to avoid.

Several members of this distinguished race have served with and risen to the highest rank in the Russian armies. One of them, Arslan Hamed Gheray, at a very early age, acquired considerable reputation as one of their ablest and most efficient officers in the late Turkish war, as General of Brigade in the army under Field Marshal the Prince Paskevitch, by whom he was despatched on his advance to Erzeroom, with a summons for the surrender of the town.

The Pacha, unwilling to accede, yet afraid to refuse, had recourse to the expedient of raising a popular emeute against the envoy, which, like a true Oriental diplomatist, he anticipated would save his credit either way: with the Russians, in the event of their success, by throwing the blame of whatever might happen upon the populace, whose infuriated passion he might assert he had wholly been unable to restrain; and if the reverse, by lauding to the Sultan the tact and zeal he had displayed in his service, by thus at one

stroke arresting the progress of the invaders, and depriving their army of one of its ablest officers.

Unfortunately for the success of his plan, his Highness on this occasion reckoned without his host; and no one ever so completely succeeded as himself in "catching a Tartar," as the phrase goes, in every sense of the word.

The unsuspecting Envoy had scarcely been ushered into the Pacha's presence, and entered upon his errand, before loud shouts and yells were heard on every side of the house, while missiles of all descriptions came crashing against the windows, at which, apparently greatly disturbed, the Seraskier presented himself for the purpose of repressing the tumult. But the General, however much accustomed he may have been to the slow routine of Russian military movement in the course of his career, had never lost the presence of mind, quickness of perception, and daring resolution of a mountain chief, prompt to determine, and swift to execute. Accordingly, the moment he was alive to the peril

of his situation, he caught the Pacha in the most heterodox manner in his iron grasp, by the Moslem's most cherished gift of nature, alike his pride and ornament—the beard, and, dragging him to the window, drew a concealed pistol, which he levelled at his head, at the same time thundering out to the mob his determination, that the very instant one single person passed the threshold of the building, their ruler was a dead man.

The old sinner, now really frightened out of his wits, in desperate bitterness of alarm, bellowed out at the full pitch of his lungs to the insurgents to keep quiet and disperse, while he shouted to his guards to cut down, shoot, bastinado, and bowstring all they could lay their hands on, that did not immediately obey. This very quickly produced the desired effect, and in a few minutes not a soul was visible; satisfied with which, the General hurled the Pacha to the end of the room, and, mounting his horse, rejoined the Marshal's camp.

Many of the leading families of the princes and nobles mention their Italian origin, and

the word "Genneveez," or Genoese, as applied to their forefathers, is of frequent occurrence. I believe, however, there is now little doubt but that the Genoese and Venetian colonists settled on the coast of the Black Sea, of whose disappearance after the fall of Constantinople, and subsequent conquest of the Greek Empire by Mahomet the Second, no authentic record has been traced, found shelter and protection in the Caucasus, and it is from them that a considerable part of the population is descended at the present period; indeed, a glance at their features, so completely Italian in their general outline, is in itself almost a sufficient evidence of its truth.

Another fact worthy of mention is, the quantity of highly-tempered and richly-wrought arms of the old Milan workmanship, which are constantly found among them, and which, though purchased at enormous prices by Russians, and others, are rarely to be obtained, it being but seldom their possessors (who regard them as heirlooms transmitted by their forefathers,) can ever be induced to part with them. In consequence of this, the

Cossacks and soldiery, after an action in which fortune has favoured them, occasionally realize large sums of money by the sale of the arms and accoutrements of their fallen adversaries; indeed, the usual price given for a coat of mail of the choicest make falls little short of a hundred pounds sterling.

These are most exquisitely wrought in point of temper, as well as light and elastic, fitting as close to the frame as a military surtout, only much less stiff and inconvenient. Of their great proof, some idea may be formed from the following anecdote, which, however incredible it may appear, was related to me by an authority on which the fullest reliance may be placed, not to mention, as another proof of its authenticity, that the invaders are not generally inclined to bestow too much praise upon their adversaries.

On one occasion, in a charge upon a Russian square, a Circassian chieftain, known to the Muscovite armies as a most formidable champion, in the act of leading on his men, had his horse shot under him. When the ball took effect, the advancing cavalry were

in full career, and not more than fifty yards distant from their opponents.

The animal still continued his onward course with unabated speed, almost close up to the bristling phalanx of bayonets before him, when he stumbled, and fell, absolutely pitching his rider, till then unconscious of the accident, right into the midst of the hostile array! He rose on the instant, borne up as it appeared by the hostile bayonets, of which a score apparently had transfixed him, when, as if by a stroke of lightning, no less than three of the soldiers nearest him, each fell successively a quivering corpse, cloven to the jaw by his powerful arm, whilst his own men, who were close behind, now crashed in upon the ranks, already disarrayed and confused by the incident.

The square was broken, the sabre plied its work with fearful vigour, the unfortunate infantry being mowed down like grass in one indiscriminate work of slaughter, and the Circassian chieftain, rescued and remounted by his followers, with the exception of a few bruises and scratches, escaped unwounded!

There are also weapons bearing other national inscriptions, which are not unfrequently met with; one of these I particularly wished to possess, and would willingly have given any price for it. It was a sabre belonging to a Pshah, or prince, who had recently fallen, and bore on the one side an imperial crown, encircled by a wreath of laurel, and on the other, a globe surmounted by a cross, with the inscription written underneath in the old English character, of "Viva Espagna." I ardently wished to purchase it, but unfortunately the Cossack into whose hands it had fallen had already promised the sale of it to a Spanish officer of rank in the Russian service.

I shall now, in conclusion, revert to the present contest between the mountaineers and the invading forces, introducing some casual detail of the incidents connected with it.

END OF VOL. I.

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